

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Master of Sacred Theology Thesis

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1962

The Theory of Adult Christian Education in the Local Lutheran Parish

John Golisch

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_golischj@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/stm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Golisch, John, "The Theory of Adult Christian Education in the Local Lutheran Parish" (1962). *Master of Sacred Theology Thesis*. 275.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/stm/275>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Sacred Theology Thesis by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

18469

THE THEORY OF ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
IN THE LOCAL LUTHERAN PARISH

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

THEORY OF ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION


by
John E. Golisch
June 1962

Approved by:



Advisor

18469



Reader

BV
4070
C69
M3
1962
no.5
C.2

18469

SHORT TITLE

THEORY OF ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. A LOOK AT THE PRESENT PROBLEMS OF ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL LUTHERAN PARISH.	1
The Problems.	1
Definitions	11
Aim and Scope of the Study.	16
Data Used and Why	17
The Plan of the Thesis.	18
II. THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	21
Knowing God--Information and/or Personal Relation	23
Purpose in Life	30
The Word--The Word--The Word.	37
Word of God--Christ	38
Word of God--Gospel	40
Word of God--Bible.	42
Law and Gospel.	45
The Holy Spirit and the Means of Grace.	48
III. THE CASE FOR ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.	52
The Needs and Desires of the Persons to be Educated--Adult Christians.	52
The Need of the Christian Adult to Sustain his Life in Christ.	56
The Need of the Christian Adult to Defend his Life in Christ	58
The Need of the Christian Adult to Grow and Mature as a Christian.	61
The Need of the Christian Adult to Respond to the Word with Worship.	66
The Need of the Adult Christian to Respond to the Word with Service.	71
IV. THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	82
The General Aim	82
Some Attempts by Others at Specific Objectives.	84
Specific Objectives in Terms of the Needs	87
To Sustain.	87
To Defend	88
To Grow	88
To Worship.	90
To Serve.	90

Chapter	Page
Training in the Skills Necessary in or Useful to Communicating the Word. . . .	92
The Place and Use of "Education" as Generally Understood.	97
V. THE LEARNING OR GROWING PROCESS AND SETTING	99
VI. SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM AND AGENCIES OF PARISH ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	112
Worship Services.	116
Preaching the Sermon.	117
The Role of the Pastor.	118
Baptism	120
The Lord's Supper--Holy Communion . . .	122
Counseling, Confession, and Private Absolution.	123
Bible Classes and other Formal Adult Christian Education	124
Parent Education.	128
A Unified, Co-ordinated Approach. . . .	132
Church Boards and Committees.	135
Other Agencies and Avenues.	139
Summary Conclusion.	141
BIBLIOGRAPHY	143

CHAPTER I

A LOOK AT THE PRESENT PROBLEMS OF ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL LUTHERAN PARISH

The Problems

Adult Lutheran Christians do have problems in the field of Christian education in their local congregations. It is well accepted that people not only can continue to learn as adults, but they usually learn even faster and better than they did as children. What is more, the need for continued learning (or something!) to meet the challenges and problems, the tensions and potentials of modern-day life is obvious and evident to all.

There has been action and activism aplenty in the church and a growing concern about missing the mark in it all. Much of the activity of church people seems beside the point of the church. And then, too, there is "the frustration that results when activist compulsions are laid upon people who cannot carry them out. The inevitable outcome is frustration, meaninglessness, or apathy,"¹ says Dr. Martin Marty. Both the real aims or "compulsions" of the Christian life and the power to carry them out are the continuing concern and essence of

¹Martin E. Marty, The New Shape of American Religion (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1958), p. 58.

Christian education for adults at least as much as for children and youth.²

The "Christ-man" is not only part of the modern world, Roland Seboldt points out, but also a member of the contemporary parish. As such he needs help, Seboldt continues:

He is not yet a complete new being through Jesus Christ. If he were a new being in the full sense of the word, he would need no one to be concerned about his Christian education. The parish, in fact, is composed of people who have the Spirit of God living in their lives. Baptized into Christ, they also live the life of Christ. At the same time, the spirits of unfaith and unrest, of despair and determinism, and of futility and fear are active upon the Christian. The solid church member becomes complacent and apathetic. He is influenced by the scienticism of his time. His values are often determined by the economics of his society. Evangelistic advertising of material products promises status and security. We can be realistic about adult Christian education in the parish only if we recognize that its members reflect both the influence of the Spirit of God and of the spirits of contemporary thought.³

The director of adult curriculum development of one of the nation's largest Protestant denominations is quoted as saying: "Most local churches have not thought through the need

²Principles for the Development of Curriculum for Adults (The Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, c.1961), p. 4, which says in part: "The growing complaints about the multiple calls the church makes upon its adults point to the need for a new approach to adult Christian education based on the nature of the Christian faith and the mission of the church, and on a careful look at the needs and yearnings of adults in this complex age in which we live."

³Roland Seboldt, "Adult Christian Education in the Parish," unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, p. 1.

to have an adequate and unified program of adult education."⁴

Dr. Oscar Feucht speaks of the "vast possibilities of Lutheran adult education."⁵

Marvin Mueller points out that while the area of adult education is not a new field, the church is just beginning to realize its responsibilities toward the adult, and the field "is one which is yet to be fully explored."⁶

The cover and the feature story of the March 6, 1962, The Lutheran Witness declares: "Adults Are Learning."⁷ That this fact is considered news in the church is significant in itself. Of even more significance, of course, are the questions

⁴Donald Louis Deffner, "The Church's Role in Adult Education," unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1957, p. 408.

⁵Christian Adult Education, A Workshop Report, held at Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois, (July 7-11, 1947) (St. Louis: By the Board for Parish Education, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States), p. 1. Hereafter this report will be referred to as CAE Workshop.

⁶Marvin Frank Mueller, "The Theological Basis for Adult Bible Study and its Practical Aspects in the Adult Educational Program of the Church," unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1961, p. 1.

⁷Robert Hoyer, "Adults are Learning," The Lutheran Witness, LXXXI (March, 1962), 1, 10-13. The article states in part: "Adults in the church are learning. Adult education is one of the swiftly developing movements in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

"Pastors and church members alike are beginning to realize that unless adults understand their faith in adult terms, they cannot well interpret it to their children in children's terms. Unless adults learn to meet adult problems with an adult knowledge of God and His will, they can neither advise nor provide examples for the youth in their problems.

"A vast body of learning and experience in the Christian faith still lies open to the individual church member."

of what (or whom?) the adults are and should be learning, why and how.

The Presbyterians point out that the church has a responsibility for adults as persons. "This obvious truth," they say, "has too long been forgotten."⁸ They say further:

The place of adults in the Christian education program is in a sense unique; their responsibilities and their needs are different from those of youth and children. In another sense, however, adults are not so different as is sometimes assumed. They, too, need Christian education; they are always "becoming"; there are in this life no finished products of the Christian education program.⁹

Dr. Marty points out the "erosion" that has occurred throughout Protestantism in America and the emergence particularly in recent years of what he terms "The Religion of Democracy," which he says is "the implicit faith of most Americans" and "the explicit faith of some of them."¹⁰ The "dissipating relativism" of this "religion-in-general"¹¹ in the end subverts the whole distinctive Christian message and meaning. If Lutherans, particularly midwestern Lutherans, have largely (or comparatively) escaped this until recently (or counteracted it considerably perhaps among the children in the Christian Day Schools), the great influx in recent years of adult accessions in the Lutheran Church who did not

⁸Principles for the Development of Curriculum for Adults, p. 5.

⁹Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰Marty, op. cit., p. 78.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 166f.

escape it makes the very basic need of survival in the faith once delivered a formidable and increasing problem for adult Christian education among Lutherans in their parishes. And as intermarriage and all the other contacts with people who have succumbed to this (inside and outside the Lutheran parish) increases, so also the need for continuing and increasing dynamic adult Christian education increases for all adult Lutherans.

The report of a workshop of Missouri Synod Lutherans education leaders emphasized the need of adult education in the form of parent education, a constantly recurring theme in current Christian education literature, in these words: "Unless we win the parents, we cannot fully gain the child."¹² And again: "Modern religious education is unsuccessful because it is child-centered and not family-centered. The church must step into the home. The parents must be educated."¹³

The importance of adult Christian education with an accent on its affect upon the home and the "group dynamics" that occur there is well-put by Dr. Edward Trefz:

When the church takes seriously its educational responsibility with adults without relaxing its effort to train the children and the youth, there is real hope that the home will begin to fulfill its responsible role as an agency for Christian nurture.¹⁴

¹²CAE Workshop, p. 27.

¹³Ibid., p. 27f.

¹⁴Earl F. Ziegler, Christian Education of Adults (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 100. Dr. Trefz adds: "The strategic place to begin is with the young adults."

This, of course, only underscores the need for Christian family education and training by the church, as the Missouri Synod education leaders' workshop reports further:

The waning of religious influence is especially responsible for the breakdown and troubles in the modern family. The family has become the victim of powerful forces and trends; it is sick but not doomed. We should and must be concerned as Christian citizens.¹⁵

The report emphasizes the point stating: "The Christian family is the hope of this world."¹⁶ Dr. Feucht says:

At a time when the American home, as never before, needs the under-girding of good Christian education, which can come only from the Church, it is our hope that every parish will set up its own program to strengthen the home.¹⁷

"Perhaps the saddest and most disheartening scene in our present social panorama is the prevalence of the broken home and its far-reaching consequences,"¹⁸ says the report quoted above. After defining "broken homes" as "not only those that have been shattered by divorces," the report concludes: "Action is needed; adult education is needed; Bible knowledge which grips the heart and life is needed."¹⁹

This last statement couples two of the dominant themes in most statements of adult education needs: parent or family education and training, and Bible study or Bible knowledge or

¹⁵CAE Workshop, p. 26.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁹Ibid.

use of the Word of God. However, for some Bible study seems to be an end in itself; while for others it is a guidebook or an inspiration for their daily living. Some look for informational or doctrinal truth in the Scriptures. Others insist on a dynamic personal encounter with God. Still others would promote it as a code of ethics and behavior, particularly in social relationships--living together in family, business, community and world.

[For Luther] the teacher's desk became also an indispensable piece of equipment. His zeal as a teacher is well known, and his example in the churches that carry on his tradition has been enduring.²⁰

Or has it? Dr. Walther stated:

We shall remain Lutheran only as long as our pastors and laity live in the Scriptures. Charles Jefferson in his treatise, "Searching the Scriptures," (American Bible Society Publication) charged already in 1931: "The majority of Christians are lukewarm in their Bible study, and the majority of those who are not Christians do not read the Bible at all. Indifference to the Bible is one of the outstanding features of our time. The Bible is a sort of souvenir of a world which is completely outgrown. To the multitude the Bible is obsolete."²¹

One may feel no little shame for a church body that has long prided itself on being "the Bible church" and Christian-education conscious to the point of supporting by far the largest and most costly educational system for its children (and more recently its high school youth) in American Protestantism to have it said in the Foreword of one of its newest books:

²⁰Nathaniel F. Forsyth, editor, The Minister and Christian Nurture (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1957), p. 14.

²¹CAE Workshop, p. 21.

This is a long-sought book. It will contribute much to one of the most neglected phases of church work--the systematic teaching of adults in Bible study groups.²²

It continues:

Most local churches still have a problem in involving the majority of their adult membership in regular Bible study classes.

In the past decade there has been much progress, but far too many Christians still fail to see the utter necessity of ongoing personal Bible study in order to cope with the problems, temptations, opportunities, and challenges of Christian adult life.²³

Dr. Feucht summarizes: "Get your adults out of the high chair. Help them to feed themselves."²⁴

Roland Seboldt speaks of the fallacy of a common assumption that all adult Christian education must be Bible study and that Bible study is equivalent to adult Christian education. He says (and this thesis will point out in detail): "This is a narrow view. Bible study is only one kind of Christian education for adults."²⁵ He points out a related misassumption:

²²Harry G. Coiner, Teaching the Word to Adults (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1962), p. 5, in the Foreword by Allan Hart Jahsmann, General Secretary of Sunday Schools of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Oscar A. Feucht, editor, Bible Class Builder, III (January, 1958), 1-4.

²⁵Seboldt, op. cit., p. 7.

that providing more adult Bible classes on Sunday morning solves the problem of adult education. This reflects the inability of the church to go beyond the accepted traditions of a given age. This assumption is stifling, and fails to consider the changing patterns of living in any society.²⁶

And yet another--concerning the societies and organizations of the parish:

It is assumed that providing "educational" topics at society meetings is adult Christian education. Such a view fails to consider what adult education is. Providing a topic is a part of the work, but in itself may not be education.²⁷

But another problem presents itself, often subverting the church's efforts to provide an increase in the variety of kinds and ways of adult education or even to carry on with present ways and still grow in the opportunities presented by the Sunday morning Bible classes and the society meeting topics. Jahsmann correctly points out:

One of the major hindrances to a more adequate program of religious education for adults is the lack of leaders with even a minimum of insight into the task of teaching adults.²⁸

Ziegler says that some people ought to resign from some adult groups, and immediately adds: "Let it not be to get out of work, but to do more competent work for the Lord in more concentrated form."²⁹

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ In Coiner, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁹ Ziegler, op. cit., p. 81.

Robert Hoyer says:

Formal adult education helps provide the spiritually informed leadership a growing church must have if it is to grow in spiritual strength and influence.³⁰

These are the men (women and youth) who vote on and decide the program of the church, local and at large. They are called upon to judge (or to leave completely "up to Pastor") matters of doctrine and other matters of spiritual life and death for many people. They organize and carry out the vital work programs of the congregation in order to accomplish their real goal. The need to train church leaders, lay leaders of all kinds, looms large on the present religious adult education scene.

These are the major problems that adult Christian education in the local Lutheran congregation faces: (1) The paucity of concern and meager program (including explicit theory, aims, and means);³¹ (2) The pressures of the secular world and the erosion of "religion-in-general," a problem that is amplified by mobility, intermarriage and the influx of new adult members; (3) The problems and break-up of so much of home life; (4) The general weak condition of adult Bible study in the church and home; (5) A false identification of Bible study (and society topics) with adult Christian education; and

³⁰Hoyer, op. cit., p. 10.

³¹Seboldt, op. cit., pp. 6 and 7. The author points out that while "the parish considers Christian education a primary responsibility," it labors under the faulty but "common assumption that Christian education is for children."

(6) A woeful lack of lay (and pastoral)³² trained leadership for the task of adult Christian education in the local churches.

Seboldt adds yet two more problems in his listing; the common assumption that adult education must be geared down to the simplest level (which is both an insult and poor education, he affirms) and the assumption that adults are not interested in thinking and learning (which he calls a defeatist attitude reflecting perhaps also "the protective fear that people may learn more than is good for them and therefore may endanger the peaceful unity of ignorance.")³³

Definitions

"Theory" as used in this thesis means the "point of," the "reason for," the "basic presuppositions and aims of," the "why" and the "what" with basic leads for the "who, when, where and how" of Christian education. The main goal and means for

³²Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Gospel to be Preached," A Symposium of Essays and Addresses given at the Counselors Conference, Valparaiso, Indiana, (September 7-14, 1960), p. 87. Cf. Dr. Caemmerer's warning to today's pastors: "There are men, good Christian men, Christian preachers, who celebrate the sacraments, confirm well-indoctrinated confirmation classes, preach nice 25-, 30-, sometimes 35-minute sermons, but they do not speak the Gospel." Hereafter this report will be referred to as CC Essays.

³³Seboldt, op. cit., p. 8. He concludes: "Christians begin with the certainty that some adults will be interested in thinking and growing, at the same time recognizing many adults are frozen in the sub-zero ice of their own limited prejudice."

achieving it are included in the word "theory," as well as something of a combined "theology-philosophy" without necessarily using all the technical terms of either discipline nor explaining it in all the thoroughness usually associated with these two terms. A good answer to the question, "Why all the concern about adult Christian education?" is what is sought in this paper under the word "theory."

"Christian" means distinctively that, not education in general, nor for or by anyone. This has to do with people who were full of sin but now are justified by faith through the grace of God in Christ, people who are new creatures, alive and growing in Christ Jesus their Lord and Savior by the power and work of the Holy Spirit. Growth in faith in Christ and the exercise of the fruits of faith, understood as the process of sanctification, is what this paper is concerned with when it uses the term "Christian education."³⁴

By "adults" is meant, as Dr. Feucht puts it: "All work with adults in all organizations and departments of church from early twenties to old age (for instance: the founding, expanding, shrinking, again family)."³⁵ Or as Marvin Mueller puts it:

³⁴William A. Kramer, "Christian Education," Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1954), pp. 207 and 212.

³⁵Deffner, op. cit., p. 417. In answer to a question about the scope of adult work.

The adult ranges in age from the young adult just out of high school to the older adult including those over the age of sixty-five . . . people who are no longer confronted with the Word of God . . . through the agencies of the parochial school, Sunday school, or Christian secondary education.³⁶

The full definition of "education" or "Christian education" is part of the whole problem and concern or aim of this study. However, some beginnings may be made at this point. Reginald Lumb says: "The work of education is . . . the training of a soul."³⁷ Sherrill writes:

Christian education is the attempt, ordinarily by members of the Christian community, to participate in and to guide the changes which take place in persons in their relationships with God, with the church, with other persons, with the physical world, and with oneself.³⁸

Ziegler says: "Adult Christian education is the enlistment and guidance of adults in their own spiritual maturing."³⁹ He also says:

In essence a program of Christian education is utilization of methods and materials to implement the gospel as it has come to us through the revelation of God in Christ. For its methods it will draw upon every resource that educators in any field have discovered and used successfully.⁴⁰

³⁶Mueller, op. cit., p. 2.

³⁷Reginald J. Lumb, The Education of Souls (London: The Faith Press, Ltd., 1952), p. 83.

³⁸Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 82.

³⁹Ziegler, op. cit., p. 21.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 74.

Dr. Feucht states that education should "Help Christian people fulfill their mission in life in view of eternal values and to this end give them attitudes, knowledge, necessary skills."⁴¹

In telling what Scripture can do for man, Dr. Franzmann states:

It can teach him, in the full Biblical sense of that word, that is, it can shape and mold man by telling him of God's will and work. Scripture confronts man with God. Therefore its Word is a Word that convicts man of his sin and makes him bow before the righteous God.⁴²

A workshop of Lutheran educators reports:

1. Learning is growth.
2. Growth proceeds by means of an inter-action of an individual and his environment.
3. Learning proceeds on the basis of an individual's total experience meeting specific situations and reacting to them.
4. Learning recognizes the needs of an individual and helps him solve his problems.
5. All learning activities must be purposeful and interesting.
6. Learning activities involving the Bible must give proper place to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.⁴³

Seboldt says the goal for parish education of adults is not knowledge, but faith. "It is not the churchly education of churchmen, but the Christian education of Christians."⁴⁴

⁴¹Deffner, op. cit., p. 416.

⁴²Franzmann, "Revelation--Scripture--Interpretation," CC Essays, p. 59.

⁴³CAE Workshop, p. 14f.

⁴⁴Seboldt, op. cit., p. 10.

It is a growing relationship of complete dependence on God and implicit trust in Him. Or, to put it another way, "Adult Christian education in the parish is every use of the Gospel to build the faith of people and to relate all other experiences in life to that faith."⁴⁵ Any knowledge gained, says Seboldt, is not prized for its own sake. It is placed at the service of the believing Christian who receives it from God and uses it for God. This definition, applied to the life of the parish, includes much more than the formal adult education classes, he concludes.⁴⁶

The writer submits that the application of the Means of Grace to the felt and recognized problems and needs of the Christian is the sum and substance of Christian education. "Means of Grace" might be rephrased "Means of Growth" for Christian education terminology. The Word to be imparted and possessed is the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ Himself. "Law" shows up sin for what it is and makes it a felt and recognized problem with a need for a solution. The Gospel Word of forgiveness in Christ answers that felt need and gives life where death impended. Knowledge and teaching of the Word of God is not so much knowing and teaching the facts and acts of the Bible as it is knowing and inducing contact with the Word of God, Jesus Christ. How this happens is dealt with in the following chapters.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁶ Cf. Ibid.

The term "The Local Lutheran Parish" means the major concern of this paper is the education and growth that should be going on within the congregation, at the parish level, locally.⁴⁷ The writer is not interested in this paper in the denomination's approach or program nor with area or district efforts, important and helpful as they may be.

"Lutheran" in this paper means Lutherans in America, primarily those congregations that make up The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, of which the writer is a member and feels his prime concern and responsibility, though certainly what is discussed in the thesis should not stop with these Lutherans or with Lutherans at all. But specific applications to the others with their own doctrines, customs, and backgrounds is left outside the scope of this paper.

The terms "Law," "Gospel," "Means of Grace," and especially "Word of God" will be dealt with extensively in the second chapter.

Aim and Scope of the Study

This study is an attempt to define, formulate and describe the aim and essence of Christian education. It will do this within the framework and understanding of conservative Lutheran theology whose sole norm and source is the verbally-inspired and all-sufficient Scriptures of God. It will attempt to apply

⁴⁷Cf. Ibid., p. 4f.

this to Lutheran adults at the parish level and in terms of what God wants to be occurring in the local Lutheran parish for the continued Christian growth and education of its adults. This study is not intended as an exhaustive nor a definitive treatise on the subject. It does, however, seek to select, describe and formulate a "theory" or "rationale" representing the "growing edge" of Lutheran and some other theoretical efforts now being made in the field of adult Christian education. In attempting this, methods and curricula are not treated in detail nor is a program for the congregation proposed. Rather, methods, curricula, program indications and sketches occur only to indicate and illustrate what the theory expounded is and implies as it is put to work in the Christian education of adults in Lutheran parishes.

Data Used and Why

Various recent books on adult Christian education from varying backgrounds were consulted in order to gain a panorama of the thinking current and past in this field. In the actual writing and development of the theory, emphasis was placed upon books, essays, articles and theses dealing with the Word of God, the Gospel, Bible Study or adult Christian education written by Lutherans, especially those of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, and selected non-Lutherans whose views either coincided in part or illustrated the theory as it developed in print. The materials used seemed to be the most productive and fruitful in formulating and illustrating the specifically Lutheran

and parish level aims of the whole adult problem which is a problem shared by all Lutherans and all Christians. The Bible, the only true primary source in religious education, was also used, consulted and kept in mind throughout the formulating of this theory.

The Plan of the Thesis

This study seeks:

1) To present evidences of the current problems in adult Christian education.

2) To explore the theological bases of adult Christian education, specifically the meaning of such terms as Christian knowledge, Christian growth, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, Law and Gospel, the means of grace.

3) To outline the basic needs of the Christian in terms of what God's plan for him is.

4) To formulate the apposite objectives for adult Christian education and specify the basic means of advancement toward them.

5) To define the context or setting of Christian education.

6) To show in brief and by examples how the theory of adult Christian education as developed in this thesis may be applied to the local Lutheran parish.

In sum, this study seeks to answer such questions as: What are the problems in adult Christian education? What is Christian education? What are the needs? The aims? The setting? Examples?

If the church has largely gotten out of touch with its adults education-wise today, how can it restore contact--contact that will be maintained and strong? Ziegler says:

Christian education must devote intelligence to assure that its program is beamed to the age in which we live for the ends to which we are born.⁴⁸

"And for the ends to which we were redeemed," needs to be added. Regarding modern methods Ziegler points out:

As long as Christian education holds to its Christian objectives, it can use methods that have been developed in other disciplines without mental reservations.⁴⁹

Most church-sponsored planned education occurs in groups. Sara Little asks some basic questions and offers a penetrating comment on them which underscores the necessity of a study like this one when she says:

Is group study a vital way to help persons grow in Christian knowledge and develop in Christian maturity? If so, why, and under what conditions? Basic theological and educational presuppositions are involved, and those who seek to lead groups in study without formulating a satisfactory answer to these questions may be building upon sand.⁵⁰

Dr. Jahsmann wrote in 1960:

Much thinking about educational implications of Lutheran theology has appeared in the past, and Lutheran pastors and teachers have talked a great deal about educational purposes, responsibilities, methods, and problems. All of this can be called Lutheran educational theory or philosophy.

However, to date no thorough systematic theoretical study of Lutheran education has been published,

⁴⁸Ziegler, op. cit., p. 20.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 74.

⁵⁰Sara Little, Learning Together in the Christian Fellowship (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, c.1956), p. 11.

either from a theological, philosophical, or from an educational point of view. That a comprehensive, integrated statement of the Lutheran point of view in education is needed will be admitted by all who know the need of clear and consistent thinking. Without such studies much educational work will continue to be haphazard, self-contradictory, and inefficient.⁵¹

This study is an attempt to move a step closer to such a "comprehensive, integrated statement" by developing and describing the "basic theological and educational presuppositions involved," at least as they relate to adult Christians. The aim of the paper is to unify and state the presupposition as clearly and correctly as possible, thus providing a basis for the further development of detailed objectives, curricula, methods and program by and for the local parishes. This study is an attempt to provide a contemporary statement of the underlying aims and principles of adult Christian education specifically applied to the local parishes of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in America.

⁵¹Allan Hart Jahsmann, What's Lutheran in Education? (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1960), p. xi.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The word "knowledge" plays a large part in education, including Christian education. The Bible speaks often of the knowledge of God by people.

The words "teaching them to observe all things" in the great commission are commonly used in Lutheran educational circles to justify emphasis on as thorough a course of indoctrination with as much memorization as possible as the major aim in Christian education.¹ Specific life-related and pupil-centered goals take the place of Bible knowledge or doctrine in some Protestant circles. Other Protestants and Lutherans adopted or adapted these but only as goals-along-with Bible knowledge and/or doctrinal formulations.

One man feels he has found the key or "clue" to Christian education "in the relevance of theology to the whole of life, and that with this clue I could open the doors of the associated questions of method, evangelism, and parent cooperation."²

Another states, on the other hand: "The central purpose of using the Bible in Christian education is to prepare the

¹Per contra cf. Roland Seboldt, "Adult Christian Education in the Parish," unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, p. 9, who says flatly: "The word indoctrinate is a poor choice for education."

²Randolph Crump Miller, The Clue to Christian Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1950), p. viii.

way for men to perceive God and respond to him in the present. We may call this the purpose of the continuing encounter."³

This brings up a basic question: What is the "knowledge of God" that people are to learn? Is it primarily facts about God, man and the way of life (temporal and eternal) or is it rather primarily getting to know God as a Person and in terms of a Person-to-person relationship?⁴ In either case, how is this done?

Few Christian theologians or educators, if any, would deny that both of these "knowledges" are involved, perhaps even inseparable,⁵ but it is necessary to determine their place and relationship if objectives, curricula, methods, and evaluations are going to follow with any real degree of validity.

³Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 95.

⁴Otto Paul Kretzmann, The Sign of the Cross (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1959), p. 22, says that some people have said that "the Christian religion is essentially a system of doctrine to be believed. If you know the doctrines and believe them, you are a Christian. . . . --partially true. There are others who have said Christianity is really a way of life. . . . (great modern heresy until recently--especially in America)--also partially true. But this definition, too, is far from complete. No, . . . Christianity is basically and essentially a living relation to a living Person. It is always and forever the relationship of a redeemed human soul to the redeeming Person of Jesus Christ in faith, in love, in trust, in obedience, in all the ways in which one person is bound to another. This is really Christianity--nothing more and nothing less." [underscoring added]

⁵Cf. Martin H. Franzmann, "Revelation--Scripture--Interpretation," A Symposium of Essays and Addresses given at the Counselors Conference, Valparaiso, Indiana, (September 7-14, 1960), p. 53, who asks: "Can the one exist without the other?" Hereafter this report will be referred to as CC Essays.

Knowing God--Information and/or Personal Relation

Dr. Arthur Repp points out the danger of confusion on this in these words regarding confirmation instruction:

Since so much of education is informational, there is a tendency to regard confirmation as an instruction in which we merely inform people about God. This is undoubtedly one of the major hazards of Christian education.⁶

Dr. Martin Marty warns against reading the Bible "as a codebook for answers or a road map for details."⁷ He points out on the other hand that "The theology of the cross . . . is empirical, operating with what it can know and love: the wounds of Christ."⁸

Canon J. Reginald Lumb points to the need "to look at the educational problem as a whole through the twin lenses of grace and truth, thinking all the way of a soul to be nourished rather than of a 'mind' to be instructed."⁹ He declares: "Our adults must be helped (in all kinds of ways) to 'grow' in grace and truth, and . . . learning is just one necessary word--though the handiest--in the process."¹⁰

⁶Arthur C. Repp, "The Theological Implications of Confirmation," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXI (April, 1960), 233-34.

⁷Martin E. Marty, The New Shape of American Religion (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1958), p. 110.

⁸Ibid., p. 168.

⁹Reginald J. Lumb, The Education of Souls (London: The Faith Press, Ltd., 1952), p. 146.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 147.

Lumb pleads further, "as a preliminary to all educational planning, that you cannot teach non-worshipping adults to grow in grace and truth,"¹¹ and the origins of truly Christian education "are to be found not in man's desire to know, but in his impulse to worship."¹² He warns of the trap of "justification by religious knowledge"¹³ and draws parallel pictures of the "children of grace" and the "children of knowledge."¹⁴ He says:

Our current ideas of religious education have so stressed the place of religious knowledge that too little room has been left for the formative realities of grace. But to think in terms of grace implies that more than the mind must be the object of education; it must reach out to embrace the soul. And, since this work is that of our Lord, through the Holy Spirit, it must be a work in which grace and truth are conjoined. This doctrine of grace would seem to require the sacraments in all education that can justify its claim to be Christian, and around those sacraments of grace a Catholic scheme of education would be built.¹⁵

Lumb defines: "Religious education, so far as man participates, is the Church's nourishment of the soul through the Holy Spirit by the combined operation of grace and truth in Jesus Christ."¹⁶

Sherrill has some of the same thoughts when he points out that Christ

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 153.

¹³Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 1-9.

¹⁵Ibid., p. vii.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 69.

is himself the Word of God. This means that in the last analysis the truth which God has communicated is not an oracle, not a proposition, not a doctrine, but a Person. Through him grace and truth became (egeneto), came into being. That is to say, both grace and truth are disclosed as a concrete, individual Person, who can be seen, heard, handled, responded to.¹⁷

Coiner says that the church should quit looking upon itself as an institution with religious, moral or social purposes, and see itself rather as a body "actually indwelt by Christ, and so fashioned into His instrument for the continuation of His redemptive purposes in the present day."¹⁸ He warns that

just as one can keep God at arm's length by knowing a lot about Him, so, by the movement of a program, can people be inoculated against the disturbing and costly continual dying and arising with Christ, to live in immediate communion with Him and with fellow Christians, with His mission as the primary concern of their existence. In Him is all priority of service and cohesion of action.¹⁹ [underscoring added]

However, Dr. Martin Franzmann asks:

Granted that the essential content of all revelation is nothing less than God Himself offering Himself to man for personal communion; does this make truth about God or formulations concerning Him a matter of secondary importance? In fact, can the one exist without the other? Is truth as encounter possible without truth as plain propositional fact? Is it possible to believe in a Person without believing that He is so and so, that He has acted thus and thus and will act thus and thus in the future?²⁰

He answers his own question:

¹⁷Sherrill, op. cit., p. 75. Cf. John 1:17

¹⁸Harry G. Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," CC Essays, p. 97.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 53.

Certainly faith is faith in a person, but such a faith never exists in abstraction; it always exists in organic connection with the belief that. . . . Passages like John 6:69; 8:24; 20:31; Rom. 10:9; 1 Thess. 4:14; 1 John 5:1 and 5:5 show how powerful and necessary the facts of faith are for the life of faith. The Gospel which Paul proclaimed to the Corinthians (and Paul's conception of faith was certainly a personal one) created faith in the Corinthians by means of the propositions that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised again from the dead according to the Scriptures.

As C. K. Barrett has pointed out . . . , "Knowing and believing are not set over against one another but correlated. . . . Knowledge has also an objective, factual side. . . . Saving knowledge is rooted in knowledge of a historical person; it is, therefore, ²¹ objective and at the same time a personal relation."

God's redemption of mankind and revelation of Himself are rooted in history. God has by this act made information about this act (the fact that God acted in this Person and through Him for the forgiveness, life and growth of His people) as well as the act itself a necessary part of communicating His love and establishing the personal relation. It is just as necessary to and part of the growth of the relationship through Christian education.

The act and the proclaiming of it are *κηρυγμα*. The teaching and application of it to the needs and toward the goals of the Christian's life are *διδασκαλη*.²² It might be noted that even in the case of an infant Baptism where no

²¹Ibid., p. 53f.

²²Richard R. Caemmerer, "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (April, 1961), 198-202.

information is communicated to the child (nor even consciously experienced in the case of a sleeping infant), God's act in Christ is implicit (for the child) and information about this act is to be made explicit to the child (by Christian education, *διδάχνη*) as he grows and develops.²³ Of course, more has to happen than the mere imparting of information or the setting up of experiences by man for growth in Christ to occur.²⁴ The Holy Spirit must do His part in the heart of the individual. He does this by using the Gospel Word of God (a factual account of the reconciling act of God in Christ) to impart the Incarnate Word and cause the Christian to grow in faith and grace.

Dr. Caemmerer points out that to all objectives of Christian education the proclaiming of Christ's completed act of

²³Franzmann, *op. cit.*, *CC Essays*, p. 54: He says: "Revelation is both encounter with the Revealer and the receiving of information from the Revealer. Faith is both faith in and belief that, in organic unity; that is, faith in a Person is possible only on the basis of believing that the Person is a certain kind of person and has acted in a certain way. Therefore the record of God's revelatory deeds and words is essential to the birth of faith and to the life of faith."

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 57f. Franzmann points out further: "We can prove according to the testimony of the oldest, the most immediate, and the least prejudiced witnesses that Jesus did perform miracles; but we cannot prove that these miracles are 'signs,' that is, that they are the works of the Servant of the Lord who took our diseases and bore our infirmities (Matt. 8:17), that they are the revelation of the arm of the Lord (John 12:38). We can prove, that is, we can make it historically probable, that Jesus of Nazareth was executed under Pontius Pilate. We cannot prove historically that which only faith can affirm, namely, that the Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was delivered up for our transgressions and was raised for our justification."

the atonement remains basic. In the process there are primarily two basic concepts and terms the Christian educator will want to understand in order to better use the Gospel Word of God in action among God's people: *κήρυγμα* and *διδασκαλία*.

Gaemmerer defines them and relates them to each other thus:

Didache, didaskalia, didaskain, katechein, paideuein, are therefore not activities separate from keryssein and euangelizein. But they are the process by which the great fact of the atonement is brought into relation with its target in the here and now. The kerygma affirms that the intention of God to redeem the world has been carried out. The didache applies that intention of God to its target now, whether that be one not yet in the orbit of the kingdom of God or whether it be a member, young or old, in the holy Christian church. For the intention of God is never merely to rescue His people from death but to employ them for the activities of rescued and rescuing people.²⁵

He says that "the kerygma is basic, an essential ingredient, toward whatever objective is before the Christian preacher or educator."²⁶ He further points out:

The kerygma is not merely a statement of fact. But it is a tool to an end. We are saying it is a tool to every Christian end. For it is the speaking, the continued proclaiming, that is the power. . . . but the moment that I speak of functions by which the objectives are to be achieved, I am speaking of didache, the process by which the kerygma is being brought to its target. . . . Another way of saying this is: Really to play its role in the process of Christian education, the Gospel has to be directed to explicit ends and purposes; but really to provide power in Christian education, it has to direct the Gospel of God toward its ends and purposes.²⁷

²⁵Gaemmerer, op. cit., p. 202.

²⁶Ibid., p. 203.

²⁷Ibid.

Caemmerer says that true Christian "teaching" revolves around its objectives, constantly relating the items to be learned to the learner's own life and growth, demanding of the teacher that he teach not for the sake of the item to be learned, or for the sake of himself, but for the sake of the learner. "In preaching we say 'The best illustration is application.' Hence the kerygma must be implemented by teaching, and the teaching must implement the kerygma."²⁸

And Dr. Caemmerer warns:

It is a deadly risk to omit the kerygma, in any phase of Christian education. "To do the right thing for the wrong reason" is not just inconvenient, but in terms of the Christian faith, it is a sin. . . . Christian education dare never depend on any power besides the truth in God's own Spirit at work in the heart, and He is there only as the individual is pondering that redeeming act of God in Christ. You can talk about good deeds and recommend them and assume that the individual is remembering that he is a baptized Christian and that the Spirit is properly at work. But unless you help the learner remember, you are running the risk of another power taking over--self-interest, or desire for approval, or fear of penalty. Or you may imply no power for motivation at all and fall into the trap of the academician in assuming that because you say the right thing the learner automatically has the will to do it--a presumption hoary with precedent in Lutheranism, and in all education.²⁹

Κήρυγμα is saying the Gospel Word of God to men. *Διδαχή* is (has to include) this plus aiming it in a particular direction toward an explicit goal of God for men.

²⁸Ibid., p. 204.

²⁹Ibid., p. 204f.

Purpose In Life

What are the goals of God for man? There ought to be a unifying principle to integrate properly the component parts that make up Christian education. And this integrating or unifying principle along with the real basic and primary aim of Christian education must follow a statement of the purpose of life, or purpose in life. What is the mission of the Christian and of the church?³⁰ What is nurture--to be fed Word of God as words or the Word-Person?

Some simply point to the Lordship of Christ and His oft-spoken simple, powerful command, "Follow me."³¹ This fits well with Jesus' emphasis on the kingdom of God which He was preaching and which will culminate in the king saying to those on the right: "You have my Father's blessing; come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made."³²

Others emphasize the "mind of Christ," and the act of conversion as "getting a new mind." Jesus emphasizes the importance and desirability of this when he says to Peter: "Away with you, Satan; you are a stumbling-block to me. You think as men think, not as God thinks."³³

³⁰Cf. Seboldt, op. cit., pp. 21-23.

³¹Matt. 19:21, where Jesus tells the young ruler to sell his possessions, give to the poor, "and come, follow me."

³²Matt. 25:34

³³Matt. 16:23

Actually God uses a number of illustrations in the Bible to stress the relationship He wants established both with Himself and then (as a necessary result or concomitant) with others. He uses the Father-son (and therefore brother) relationship. He speaks of the King-subject or -citizen (and therefore fellow-citizen) relationship. He groups the believers into a relationship so close to each other that He refers to them in the singular: the church, the bride of Christ, the Body of Christ. And yet the relationship is never really closer than to Christ Himself, never valid or real apart from Christ, and ever subject to Christ.³⁴

And, of course, there are other illustrations (besides Bridegroom-bride, Head-body) that point in their own ways to the close relationship of Christ and the Christian, such as: vine-branch, shepherd-sheep, rabbi-disciple, springs or fountains and water, the Bread, the Door, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light.

Then there is the terribly exciting picture of man being given the "image of God" with its vital meaning for others as Dr. Caemmerer presents it in his book God's Great Plan for You.³⁵ Caemmerer states:

³⁴Marty, op. cit., p. 119, says: "Only the man who is fully obedient and trustful toward the God who is really God, is free to act for his fellow man without first considering merit or reward or consequence. Each Christian derives his impulse and his values from a 'vertical' relationship to God, out of which his horizontal relations to his fellows grow."

³⁵Richard R. Caemmerer, God's Great Plan for You (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1961).

When a man is renewed in the image of God, says St. Paul, he is renewed in the knowledge of God. That means that God Himself is busy in him with the life that stirs and moves in him.³⁶

He further points out that Jesus

said that His disciples are related to Him as friends who hear from Him what the Father has given Him to tell and to do, and who then do what He commands. His great command is "that ye love one another as I have loved you." That "as" is important, for it describes the size and nature of Jesus' kind of love. That is, "that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The person who copies the image of God which Jesus gives, therefore loves the next person as Christ loves. In fact, He loves Christ with the love with which Christ first loved him. He thinks of his life as belonging to Jesus; he is ready to "lose his life" for Jesus. This "losing" is not merely dying, but it may mean simply living so that Jesus' work gets done and Jesus' plans get carried out.³⁷ These plans always involve loving other people.

In defining the image of God and the importance of this concept for the total life of the Christian, Dr. Caemmerer says: "The image of God has to do with God's purposes to the world, God's intentions."³⁸ He warns of some ideas which "tend to build God in the image of people, rather than people in the image of God."³⁹ He further states that the image of God is "to say the things that God would say . . . to go where God goes and to lend a hand to the tasks which God wants to have done."⁴⁰ He further defines it:

³⁶Ibid., p. 64.

³⁷Ibid., p. 66.

³⁸Ibid., p. 8.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 9.

That God made man in His image means that He planned for man to have God's plans and desires.

This wasn't merely a plan. God equipped man for it. We are told in the story of creation that God fitted out the human being with His own Spirit and presence.⁴¹

And he says again: "The image of God isn't knowing right from wrong; it is doing the right, and doing it with a will!"⁴²

And bearing the image and all it means, says Caemmerer, is the purpose in life for all Christians. He says it in these words:

That they bear the image of God is not just an after-effect or a by-product of belonging to God. But it is the purpose for their being God's people. This is what He made them for--and remade them for--to show Him to others.⁴³

The world's greatest task is keeping people alive with the life of God at work within them:

In God's purpose men are to live in interrelating blocks and groups of people, the family at the start. God wants to move into every human being, young or old, and He wants to stay there. But He makes people responsible for keeping the life of God coming into other people.⁴⁴

He says it over and over again in many ways, but it all comes back to the simple statement of "the job that God made men for: to bring Him into human hearts."⁴⁵ The image of God "is the life that springs from God Himself. It isn't just being

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 11.

⁴³Ibid., p. 30.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 43.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 44.

different. It is the job of helping people know God."⁴⁶ There it is again--education--knowing not primarily something, but Someone. St. Paul writes of "learning Christ" as well as knowing Him.⁴⁷ Everything in life including everyday eating and drinking is to be done with one purpose, to glorify or honor God, Paul tells the Corinthians.⁴⁸ "That is good image-of-God language," says Caemmerer, and explains: "Our entire lives should reveal, also in non-spectacular and in ordinary and habitual areas, that God is at work within us."⁴⁹ Caemmerer points out that the same word in Greek for "learning" is found also in the word for "disciple." And while at first glance the rabbi-disciple (or teacher-learner) relationship would seem to indicate the vertical God-to-man relationship primarily or perhaps even exclusively, Caemmerer shows how the horizontal relationship of disciple-to-disciple, Christian-to-Christian was far from being excluded or thought of as an "extra" or optional in the mind and teaching of Christ:

Jesus told His first disciples that men would know that they were His disciples "if ye have love one to another." He used another term to denote this process of learning: "friends." He said that His disciples are related to Him as friends who hear from Him what the Father has given Him to tell and to do, and who then do what He commands. His great command is "that ye love one another as I have loved you."⁵⁰

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 27.

⁴⁷Eph. 4:20

⁴⁸1 Cor. 10:31

⁴⁹Caemmerer, God's Great Plan for You, p. 66.

⁵⁰Ibid.

In the Mary and Martha incident Jesus recognized that a person can serve and love another by ministering to the life of the body--Jesus healed and fed many and it was out of love for them--but "He was concerned first of all that the life from God in the heart should be nurtured. Jesus' disciples should likewise," says Caemmerer.⁵¹ "The man in the image of God . . . is in the business of displaying God at work," says Caemmerer, and continues that God's people "must live their lives alert and conscious of God's will and the opportunity for displaying God's will in action."⁵²

Other terms that link and overlap with "image of God" in pointing out much the same idea are: "glory,"⁵³ "disciple,"⁵⁴ the Christian's "calling,"⁵⁵ "witness,"⁵⁶ "light,"⁵⁷ and

⁵¹Ibid., p. 67.

⁵²Ibid., p. 69.

⁵³Ibid., p. 76, "The means by which the invisible God makes Himself apparent to the eyes and experience of men."

⁵⁴Ibid., "One who learns to be like Jesus and follows Him for the sake of helping others to know Him too."

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 77, Part of this is "calling people to God" and among Christians "to help one another keep on hearing . . . that God has called them through Jesus Christ, and in that call they find power to stay at it."

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 81, "St. Peter says that God called His people out of darkness so that they might show and display His own praiseworthy virtues and powers. Jesus said that His disciples are the light of the world when men see their good works and realize that they are the product of God."

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 79f., "The witness is a man who has seen God's promise and plan to redeem the world come true in Christ

"fellowship."⁵⁸ Thus many of the key terms of Jesus for His disciples--like the term "disciple" itself

fit into this two-ply construction of the Christian religion, namely, that the Christian man is to be at once man who hears and sees, is struck by God's saving act, and then speaks and passes God's action on to the next man. Jesus wants us to be "children of the resurrection," who are raised from the dead by the Father's love in Christ and then convey the Word of life to the next person. He wants us to be sons of the Kingdom, people to whom the life and rule of God comes and who then "preach the Kingdom" and cause it to enter and remain in the next person. He wants us to come under the love of God (He Himself dies in God's great giving of Himself to men), and He wants us to love as He loved and bring others close to God in the process.⁵⁹

Jesus. The power of that work has begun to change him, and now he becomes a man who causes this same change to take place in others."

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 83-85, "When Christians are in fellowship they keep building one another up in the faith and life that is the gift of God within them." And "in order to do this job of mutual repair and building, Christians speak the Word of life in Christ to one another . . . they do not interrupt the flow of good from one person to the next." The Christian "says the things that produce God's own life in the next man." "Thus the fellowship of the Holy Christian church becomes an agency for preserving and improving the likeness of God that Christians are and produce in their daily lives."

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 84f.

The Word--The Word--The Word

In Teaching the Word to Adults Professor Harry G. Coiner defines teaching as "one means or method by which the power of God's Word is shared or appropriated."⁶⁰ He further underlines the power and importance this Word has by stating: "When we are weak and fall away from God, the Word brings us back and sets us into a new and vital relationship with Him."⁶¹ The term "Word of God" is used often. Tremendous power is attributed to it. But the term itself has a number of different uses and definitions.

Drs. Walter Roehrs and Martin Scharlemann point to the validity of using the term "Word of God" to mean the "acts of God," particularly the saving act.⁶² In this connection Dr. Martin Franzmann titles a book (and the book in the Bible called the Acts of the Apostles says) The Word of the Lord Grows.⁶³ This volume leads not out of but back into the Bible. All three men point out repeatedly the Bible is even in its very formulations the "Word of God" in no second-rate

⁶⁰Harry G. Coiner, Teaching the Word to Adults (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1962), p. 19.

⁶¹Ibid. He cites Ephesians 2:4-10 in this connection.

⁶²Martin H. Scharlemann, "God's Acts as Revelation," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (April, 1961), 209-216, and Walter R. Roehrs, "The Theology of the Word of God in the Old Testament," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (May, 1961), 261-273.

⁶³Martin H. Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1961).

or inferior sense to the previous definition. God reveals Himself to man in acts and words, Word and action. The message or "Revelation" or "Importing" of God to man is "Word of God." It makes no difference whether this is Word (formulations) of God or Word (actions) of God. It is still Word of God! And as such it is entirely trustworthy, powerful and inspired in spite of the false division and ambiguous language employed by many modern theologians on this score.

But pedagogically and homiletically there still remain at least three valid and distinct (if inextricably interrelated) uses of the term Word of God. Since this is the case, it is understandable that the terms may not be used precisely at times. One may believe that confusion of these terms in popular usage and in Christian education circles could result. The Bible uses the term Word of God and related terms in at least three distinct and different, if overlapping, ways.

Word of God--Christ

The "Word of God" is the "Word made flesh," in which God spoke to men in and through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Word which clarifies all the other words that God has spoken across space and time.⁶⁴ This is clear in chapter one of the Gospel according to Saint John. Coiner points out:

The focal point of the Biblical revelation is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the writer of Hebrews tell us, God had been

⁶⁴Cf. Coiner, Teaching the Word to Adults, p. 65.

speaking to men for long ages in a variety of ways and through a number of different persons, but finally He spoke to men in and through His Son. (Heb. 1:1, 2)⁶⁵

Scripture says the Word has power! The Word of God is God, the God-man Jesus Christ, Son of God, to whom belongs all power in heaven and in earth. When that Word is imparted (Jesus Christ Himself shared, given, and received), the Spirit uses it to change people. God lives in them--either for the first time or to a greater extent than He did before!

Those who "share in the very being of God"⁶⁶ are those who know God and are renewed in His image because God, the Word of God named Jesus Christ, lives in them and with them as He once lived, died, and rose again for them.⁶⁷ This is no mystery, no surprise--if one grants the resurrection of Christ and the power and the love of God in the first place.

But how does this "Word of God Incarnate" (who also calls Himself simply "The Truth")⁶⁸ get into, dwell within, take possession of, and grow in people? How is this linked with Christian education? This leads to the second definition or usage of the term "Word of God" and its parallels.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶2 Peter 1:4

⁶⁷Caemmerer, God's Great Plan for You, p. 14, says the Christian life according to the Bible is "the life that a man lives when God Himself is at work within him, shaping his desires and his behavior so that God's own self and person, God's own Spirit and thrust, is the manager of the man."

⁶⁸John 14:6

Word of God--Gospel

The second "Word of God" is the most common and has the most variegated usage in the Bible. This is the "Word of reconciliation" of 2 Corinthians chapter 5. This is the Message of forgiveness and life in Christ from God to man. This is the Gospel (or, since conviction by the Law must precede effective use of the Gospel, Law and Gospel). This is the distinctive Lutheran doctrine and use of the means of grace. This forgiving Word of the Gospel (and its prerequisite, the Law) is the Word of God that Christian education and Christian adults will use the most and be most concerned about because it imparts, shares, gives the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, with it and in it. It does this whether it is spoken, read, seen, or felt (and tasted) in speech, books, actions that are properly interpreted, and in the sacraments of Absolution, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Dr. Caemmerer points out that this Word, this message, is the tool the Holy Spirit uses for reclaiming men for God's image, for living and doing to God's glory. Listen as he describes it:

This tool is the Word of God, the Word of the Gospel, the Word of Christ--the Bible uses the terms interchangeably. "Word" means that the tool gets people to think ideas which can be signaled in words. The Gospel is a message, men can read and speak it. But in Bible language, "word" also means that a power is at work to achieve great changes. When the word of people lodges in my mind, I say that I have been instructed, or interested, or informed. When the Word of God moves in on me, I move, and my inner nature changes. That is why

the Word of God is so important for this great rebuilding of the image of God.⁶⁹

He continues and warns against use of any other message even though it may be couched in religious or Biblical words and phrases. This is a warning against indiscriminate use of Bible excerpts for any other purpose or with any other result than getting this Message, this Word of the Gospel and Christ, to people so the Holy Spirit can use it. He says it this way:

Not just any religious or Biblical words will do as the tool of the Spirit. But the moving and powerful word to restore the image of God in man is always the Word of Christ, or the Word of the Gospel. It is the message and story that Jesus Christ, God's Son and the image of God, came into the world, suffered, died, and rose again, in order to set men free from death and bondage and restore them to the life and image of God.

. . . Hence when men hear the Word spoken, or otherwise are led to think its message that Jesus Christ died for them and rose again, the work of the Spirit is there going on.⁷⁰

To get this saving Word and message into the hearts of people is the real function, the real job of Christian education. Various settings for doing this, various ways of getting the message to the people, and various immediate objectives there may be in the many-faceted work of the church, but the Word of the Gospel, containing and giving the Christ as God's gracious answer to the condemnation proceedings that preceded, is the tool of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing His work. Getting this Gospel Word in contact with people (the "raw material"--or "material in process," partly "tooled") is

⁶⁹Caemmerer, God's Great Plan for You, p. 54.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 54f.

the job of the church, all its members and all its agencies.

As Dr. Franzmann puts it:

According to the Bible, man is created in the image of God, for converse and communion with God. Man is designed to be "invaded" by God. If man refuses to give God room in his life, his life does not remain empty. It is invaded by the powers of Satan, whether man believes it or not, whether man consciously knows it or not. The life which will not be filled by God becomes the empty, swept, and garnished house, which invites the hosts of Satan. (Matt. 12:43-45)⁷¹

Word of God--Bible

But what of the Bible itself? Is not this the "Word of God?" "Scripture is the record of God's revelation and is the continuation of it. Scripture is the Word of God," says Franzmann.⁷² St. Paul speaks of "the sacred writings which have power to make you wise and lead you to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."⁷³ The Constitution of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod says: "Synod, and every member of Synod, accepts without reservation: 1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice."⁷⁴

⁷¹Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 66. Cf. also Caemmerer, God's Great Plan for You, p. 56, and Coiner, Teaching the Word to Adults., p. II.

⁷²Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 58.

⁷³2 Tim. 3:15. Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 59, comments: "Paul is pointing Timothy to a source of power for his ministry. The first thing he says about the sacred writings, which Timothy has known from childhood, is that they have power--power to make him wise for salvation. Scripture has power because the Spirit of God is in it and works creatively by it. It creates nothing less than faith in Christ Jesus. 'Every passage of Scripture,' Paul says, 'stems from the Spirit of God.'"

⁷⁴Article II of the "Constitution of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod," Handbook of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (June, 1960).

But a wrong emphasis and misunderstanding of what the Bible is and does has often contributed to closing this Book to many.

"The Bible, the Word of God, is intended to move men," says Dr. Franzmann.⁷⁵ He continues: "It remains always fresh and timely, not because it formulates timeless truths but because it tells an ageless story, a story that concerns all mankind so long as mankind shall live."⁷⁶ Franzmann further points out that both John and Paul parallel their written Word with their spoken Word without distinguishing between them and connecting them both up with the working of the Spirit. And John says of his written Word that through it men may have faith in Jesus Christ and thus have eternal life in His name.⁷⁷ This means that for purposes of Christian education the written Word of the Bible is not essentially different in purpose or use from the spoken (or written or visible, sacramental) Word of Christ communicated and formulated today. "The Word of God [rightly used] is God's redeeming [and sanctifying] activity among men in Jesus Christ His Son."⁷⁸ The "Gospel" and "Bible" definitions of the term "Word of God" are equal, on a par with

⁷⁵ Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 56.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 60.

⁷⁸ Marvin Frank Mueller, "The Theological Basis for Adult Bible Study and its Practical Aspects in the Adult Educational Program of the Church," unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1961, p. 2.

each other in purpose: to communicate, share, impart Christ (the first definition of "Word of God") to people.⁷⁹ Kleinhans says: "The written Word is the foundation for the spoken Word, for the preaching of the Gospel, for the day-to-day witness of Christian life."⁸⁰ This means that in order to properly speak the forgiving Word of the Gospel, the witness and the educator ought be very close to and understand the Message as it comes in and from and through the Bible Word of God. It was written as a contemporary witness and a specific application of the Word of Christ to people. The Message is the same. Only the language patterns and particular complexities of circumstances are different. Robert Hoyer points out that the task of the New Testament writers for their hearers and readers was exactly the task of Christian preachers and teachers today for their readers and hearers. He presents it thus:

⁷⁹ Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 60: "Jesus, according to John, stakes the whole future of His work and His church on the inspiration of His apostles. Future generations shall come to faith through their Word (John 17:20). Their witness to Him will be an inspired witness (John 15:26, 27). Through them the Holy Spirit will convict, that is, confront the world with the ultimate issues, the issues of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit through the Word of these men will confront men with the living reality of the incarnate Christ and thus bring them to repentance (John 16:7-11). And through their Word the Holy Spirit will bring men to faith; He will lead the disciples into all truth and bring home to them the full glory of the Christ whom they have seen and known (John 16:12-15). Their Word will therefore have in it the whole majesty and mercy of the Christ, their Word will have the power to do what only God Himself can do, the power to remit and retain sins. (John 20:20-23)" Their word can do this, of course, because that Word is and conveys Christ--God Himself, the Incarnate Word of God.

⁸⁰ Theodore Kleinhans, Talking With God (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1962), p. 7.

Less than a year after He began His public ministry, Jesus called twelve men and made them His apostles. They were to live in fellowship with Him, learn to know Him and His kingdom, and be His representatives when He left. They became the teaching nucleus of the church, the eyewitnesses of God's gift in Christ.⁸¹

Law and Gospel

"The central orientation of Lutheran education lies," says Coiner, "in the movement of God into the life of the baptized and the continuation of that movement through the Word of God as God's people share, by teaching as a God directed, functional, means, Law and Gospel with one another and the world."⁸² He says further:

The task given the Christian teacher is to confront the learner with the Biblical truth of Law and Gospel, rightly applied, and of man's sin and God's grace in Christ. This is the truth which prepares the learner to trust God, through Christ, that he may receive the power from the Holy Spirit to live in commitment to God as a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17), created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and to be sustained in his faith through Word and Sacrament (Eph. 2:10).⁸³

Franzmann declares:

Paul proclaims his Gospel always under the overarching shadow of the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18), to men under the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13, 14), to men who must stand silent before the judgment seat of God, with no

⁸¹Robert Hoyer, Yours Is the Kingdom (Adult Bible Discussion Guide, I, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1961), p. 18.

⁸²Harry G. Coiner, "What Is Lutheran in Education?," unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, p. 3.

⁸³Harry G. Coiner, "The Theology of Christian Education Related to Its Purposes," unpublished first-draft manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., p. 3.

plea to offer for themselves, convicted by the Law which brings them knowledge of their sin but no release from sin.⁸⁴

In fact, continues Franzmann: "No rabbi before Jesus and no moralist after Him ever took the Law so seriously as Jesus did; He makes every jot and tittle count."⁸⁵

Caemmerer adds that Christian education is

simply the process of causing the individual to grasp God's own grace in Christ Jesus by faith. This process takes many forms, but central to all of them is the necessity that he must be enabled to sense the wrath of God for sin and failure to fulfill God's plan, and the necessity that he must see and grasp God's mercy toward him in Jesus Christ and consume it for himself as the one food for his life toward God.⁸⁶

He continues:

We Lutherans have a name for this teachable dual message (the wrath of God for sin, and the mercy of God in Christ). We call it Law and Gospel. It becomes the resource for many processes of the Christian's life. As the Christian friend converses about the needs of his daily vocation or the fears and problems of his career, Law and Gospel are the witness he speaks. As the teacher prepares the child or youth to earn his livelihood, Law and Gospel become the call and the enabling power for the Christian vocation. As the Christian worships God alone or in company with fellow Christians, Law and Gospel become the essential ingredient of his thinking, summoning him to confess his sin, giving him faith in God, peace through Christ, and the will to consecrate his life to God's tasks.⁸⁷

Franzmann remarks:

⁸⁴Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 50.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Richard R. Caemmerer, "Legalism, Revivalism, and the Gospel in Christian Education," Lutheran Education, XCVI (January, 1961), p. 216.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 216f.

It is amazing to see how often this basic Law-Gospel fact of revelation is overlooked or slighted or blurred in current discussions of revelation. . . . And as we love the Gospel, we must proclaim the Law; for unless the Law is heard in all its rigor, men have no ears for the Gospel. Where the Law is unaccented, the Gospel has lost its real accent too.⁸⁸

Coiner can write, "There is no portion of Holy Scripture that does not in some form shed light upon the saving activity of God,"⁸⁹ and "The focal point of the Biblical revelation is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ,"⁹⁰ precisely because all of Scripture is (or presents insights for application of) Law or Gospel, and all of Law (in this definition) leads to Gospel proclamation.⁹¹ Caemmerer puts it this way:

The preaching of the Law should always move the hearer to one great demand upon the preacher: "Tell me your Gospel; I want help to do God's will." . . . This is precisely what must go on in every process of teaching the Christian religion and in every process of operating a Christian school. The learner must be helped to envision God's plans for his behavior in every domain of his life. He must be helped to confront, honestly and as his own predicament before God, his failures and his weaknesses in carrying out the plan, and he must see that he is failing not merely in terms of human expectations but he is failing the Holy God. He must be helped as an act of personal desire and with the high hope of improvement to say: "Help me with God's own help; give me God's own power to live my life, to do my work." And then he must be helped to find and to see that power, to review and ponder Christ Jesus as God's guarantee of renewal, the one through whom death has been killed and life has been brought to

⁸⁸Franzmann, op. cit., CC Essays, p. 50f.

⁸⁹Coiner, Teaching the Word to Adults, p. 65.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Cf. also Caemmerer, "Legalism, Revivalism, and the Gospel in Christian Education," op. cit., p. 285f.

light. In the teaching process this must happen over and over again, and the learner must be led to play his role, not merely in hearing the answer but in speaking it to his brother.⁹²

It was John the Baptizer's theme,⁹³ but Jesus too preached "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is upon you"⁹⁴ as well as proclaiming "the gospel of the Kingdom."⁹⁵

Caemmerer urges: "Distinguish between Law and Gospel, but don't separate them from each other."⁹⁶ And Coiner points out the importance of this whole concept:

From this Biblical bench mark of man's sin and God's grace Lutheran education receives its content, its motivation, objectives, and power. Lutherans educate, in the complete meaning of the term, because they believe that salvation is completed and offered by God in love to men; that it is appropriated by men through personal faith in the promises of God, the Gospel; and that the preaching and teaching of the Gospel unleashes the power to believe unto salvation and to do those good works which please God and complete His purpose for men.⁹⁷

The Holy Spirit and the Means of Grace

Coiner says:

Christian education begins with the basic revealed truth that God, in love, by a free and gracious act through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, forgave the sins of all men and proposed to

⁹²Ibid., p. 220.

⁹³Matt. 3:2.

⁹⁴Matt. 4:17.

⁹⁵Matt. 24:14.

⁹⁶Caemmerer, "Legalism, Revivalism, and the Gospel in Christian Education," op. cit., p. 223.

⁹⁷Coiner, "What Is Lutheran in Education?," p. 1.

restore them to sonship and to send His Spirit back into their hearts. In Luther's language, the basic premise of Christian education is that man cannot come to faith in Christ by his own reason or strength, but God can and does call men by the Gospel, gathers them into His church, enlightens and sanctifies them by the gracious activity of the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments, and sustains them in Jesus Christ in true faith.⁹⁸

Dr. J. T. Mueller says:

The term means of grace denotes the divinely instituted means by which God offers, bestows, and seals to men forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Properly speaking, there is but one means of grace, namely, the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16ff.), but since in the Sacraments the Gospel appears as the verbum visibile (the visible Word) in contradistinction to the verbum audibile (the preached Word), it is rightly said that the means of grace are the Gospel and the Sacraments. The divine Law, though also a divine Word and used by the Holy Spirit in a preparatory way to work contrition, without which there can be no saving faith, is not, properly speaking, a means of grace, since it does not offer forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, but merely demands, threatens, and condemns.⁹⁹

He points out further:

The means of grace have an offering or conferring power, by which God most earnestly offers to all men forgiveness of sins, life and salvation . . . , and an operative or effective power, by which through them the Holy Spirit actually works faith and thus regeneration and sanctification in men.¹⁰⁰

The result of this theology would be that the Sacraments will play a large part in Christian education, particularly the Christian education of adults. Coiner says:

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹John T. Mueller, "Grace, Means of," Lutheran Cyclopedia. Edited by Erwin Lueker. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1954), p. 424.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

Christian education differs from all other education in this that God Himself is the effective agent. Though regeneration and faith grows out of the educative process, such spiritual life cannot be guaranteed by it. The function of teaching does not depend upon human pedagogical skill but upon the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit operating through the Word.¹⁰¹

And Dr. Mueller declares:

The Sacraments have the same effect as the spoken or written Word, because they are nothing else than the visible Word or the Gospel, applied in sacred action in connection with the visible signs. For this reason the Sacraments offer, convey, and seal to the recipients forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation just as the Gospel does when it is spoken, contemplated, or read.¹⁰²

The purpose of the church in the Christian education of adults is to bring the Gospel into the life and consciousness of the learner and to help him apply it to his needs and for the goals God has for him. Whether this Gospel penetrates, gets through to him and accomplishes its mission, is a matter between him and the Holy Spirit. Man (including Christian educators) is helpless when it comes to accomplishing that. But man is not helpless when it comes to getting the explosive power (the Greek word is *δυναμις*) of the Gospel to the scene of expected action--the Christian adult. No explosive accomplishes its purpose of change of condition unless it is brought into contact (or close proximity) with the object to be changed, to be impacted upon. The task of Christian education is to use the divine Law and the Gospel Word of God (the means of

¹⁰¹Coiner, "The Theology of Christian Education Related to Its Purpose," p. 2.

¹⁰²John T. Mueller, op. cit., p. 425.

grace), Word and Sacraments to bring Christ the Word into contact with the Christian to accomplish God's purposes through and in him. What then happens after the contact has been accomplished and recognized is the responsibility and work of the Holy Spirit and no longer within the province of the Christian or Christians doing the educating (though they will be very happy and praise God as they see His Word and work not returning void but accomplishing that for which it was sent out).

"For the church the power is never anything less than God Himself. The power isn't in the money. The power isn't even in the preacher. The power is always in God."¹⁰³

¹⁰³Caemmerer, "The Gospel to be Preached," CC Essays, p. 82.

CHAPTER III

THE CASE FOR ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Needs and Desires of the Persons to be Educated--Adult Christians

As physical birth gives potentialities that need to be developed, so also at the second birth abilities are given that need to be developed. According to Lumb: "It will be the concern of [a man's] religious education to see that he discovers his gifts and uses them. This is indeed what religious education is all about."¹

Adults are complex people. No two are exactly alike. Each has a different set of abilities and interests and needs. And while some needs are basic to everyone, there is the factor of independence of action with which to be reckoned. Not only needs, but felt needs and known interests are important. Adult people have to be motivated and recruited for Christian training programs almost always before they enter upon them.

This presents a problem: motivating adults and keeping their interest and satisfaction high enough to win out in the competition for their time and effort. It also presents an opportunity: this ought to mean that all are motivated and ready to do their parts in actively working toward the goals. To the extent that people are involved from a false motivation,

¹Reginald J. Lumb, The Education of Souls (London: The Faith Press, Ltd., 1952), p. 14.

however (such as habit or social pressure), neither the problem nor the opportunity mentioned above will be present.

Adults should be grouped, according to Ziegler, but the complexity of their interests and their backgrounds means there will be much overlapping and changes in groupings as various interests center in various groups. He points out, too, that even among young adults and older adults "chronological age . . . has less significance than other factors in describing needs, interests, and characteristics."² Marriage, for example, or the coming of the first child marks a tremendous change in the interests of people--also in their felt needs and real needs, or at least in the setting in which these needs occur. Ziegler points out that adulthood extends from the early twenties (or even younger)

until the sun of life has set. These long-lived adults are in every conceivable category: married, single, widowed, divorced; married with children, without children, with grandparents; in all kinds of vocations and avocations; sick and well; church and unchurched; social-minded, antisocial, inactive in social affairs; educated and uneducated; spiritually maturing, arrested in development, headed backward; leaders, followers; aggressive, indifferent, hostile; co-operative, non-co-operative. To extend the listing is merely to illustrate how complex adulthood is. If we shudder at the task of guiding youth into a satisfying Christian experience, we do well to stand in awe before the problem of enlisting men and women in the gospel program.³

Describing adults within the framework of Christian belief, one would say that adults are people made by God, redeemed

²Earl F. Ziegler, Christian Education of Adults (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 88.

³Ibid., pp. 36f.

through Jesus Christ. They are to be remade in the image of God by the Holy Spirit through the "foolishness" of the proclamation of the Word of the Gospel. And they are to show forth God and His glory and praises to one another as long as God gives them breath and power (Himself) through His Word of reconciliation.

Adults are also sinners. As long as they live they are in need, desperate and continued need, of the Word of forgiveness. Sin is the chief obstacle to adult learning in all adults. It sets up barriers to God's educating, renewing, nurturing process because the sinner is a rebel, resisting what God is trying to break through and do with him.⁴

The great need of the adult then is to be brought into meaningful and understandable contact with the Law and the Gospel applied or readily applicable to his situation. So-called "teachable moments" in Christian education would be when the Holy Spirit uses the Law to convict a man so he sees himself convicted and in need and again as he stands convicted when the Gospel Word of God reaches him and is used by the Holy Spirit to give him Christ the Incarnate Word and all the forgiveness, peace, joy, power, etc. that come with Him.

St. Paul says that the church consists of the people of God because of the action of God and that in the church the life of its members is given, nourished,

⁴Ibid., cf. p. 26.

and activated by what Christ gives through Word and Sacrament.⁵

Adults are (or are to be) members of that church. The adult Christian needs to recognize and grow in the completeness of his commitment to Christ in spite of any "illogicalness" of it to his human reason, will or emotions.⁶ The task and needs of the adult Christian are the task and needs of the church, the Body of Christ, completely committed to and dependent on its head, the Lord Christ. Essentially then the needs are: to sustain the Christian life, to defend it against its enemies, to grow in Christ and the image of God, to respond in worship and praise, and to respond in loving service for the welfare of others primarily by proclaiming and applying the Word of Christ to them as Christian witness or Christian education.

These are the needs common to every sinner-saint, every adult Christian. The Word of God, the Bible, says these are the needs of the Christian. It also says the dynamic Word-message that brings Christ the Word of God along with it has, gives and is the power to fulfill the needs and accomplish the

⁵Harry G. Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," A Symposium of Essays and Addresses given at the Counselors Conference, Valparaiso, Indiana, (September 7-14, 1960), p. 93. Hereafter this report will be referred to as CC Essays.

⁶Martin H. Scharlemann, "The Paradox in Perspective," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVIII (May, 1957), 358-59. He points out further that Scripture, Luther and Walther support this in opposition to the modern scientific method and logical positivism.

will of God for, in and through man. "His Word grows; His will is done,"⁷ says Franzmann.

Werner Elert suggests the thought that the church lives under the rhythm of hearing and telling of the Word. Paul before him declared: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10)⁸

Sara Little says the "goal is not to develop 'other-directed' people, but people whose lives are directed by their Christian faith,"⁹ or "by the Word, by Christ" to put it in sharper focus and the language of this thesis, Lutheran theology and the Bible.

The Need of the Christian Adult to Sustain His Life in Christ

"It was not easy for the early Christians to maintain the high level of missionary fervor and communal love which were the basic characteristics of the new community,"¹⁰ says Franzmann. He continues:

Even his [Luke's--in Acts] succinct and schematic presentation of the life of the first church makes it clear enough that this level of life under the Lord was by no means a self-evident and automatic possession of the church, but involved a constant and strenuous struggle.¹¹

⁷Martin H. Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 4.

⁸H. J. Eggold, Jr., "Hearing and Telling the Word," CC Essays, p. 72.

⁹Sara Little, Learning Together in the Christian Fellowship (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, c.1956), p. 29.

¹⁰Franzmann, op. cit., p. 21.

¹¹Ibid., p. 22.

The New Testament epistles are filled with warnings against false prophets, false teachings and the danger of losing faith in and possession of Christ just as the Old Testament prophets constantly call to repent and return to the Lord. St. Paul makes quite a point of his confidence in God's sustaining him. Predestination is the comforting Word of God proclaimed in this connection. This need of sustenance is a need of the Christian adult to which Christian education must address itself (and its Gospel-Word). Jesus criticizes some Pharisees on this score when He tells them: "It was because you were so unteachable that Moses gave you permission to divorce your wives; but it was not like that when all began."¹²

Ziegler puts the same problem in today's setting:

There is nothing more pleasurable to behold than a couple keeping in love all through middle adulthood. It doesn't always happen, the records sadly declare. It could happen more often if the church program of adult Christian education were timed and tuned to offer resources to these people.¹³

Sherrill recognizes it as a main job of Christian education:

A statement of the ends sought in Christian education might contain such elements as these: that persons might be drawn into the kingdom of God; that they might attain to increasing self-understanding and self-knowledge and an increasing realization of their own potentialities; and that they might sustain the relationships and responsibilities of life as children of God.¹⁴

¹²Matt. 19:8

¹³Ziegler, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁴Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 83.

Dr. Caemmerer points out that the need is not simply to have the Christian life sustained, but pinpointing it further the need is really constantly to possess Christ the Word of God who comes and dwells in people through the preaching and teaching and applied contact with the Word of the Gospel.

Caemmerer writes to preachers:

Every time you preach this Gospel you are firming up and confirming the tie of this peace. You are bringing people again under its mighty spell. You are causing people again to be brought up into the sunlight of God's own life and light in Christ Jesus. And if you don't preach it, you don't do it.¹⁵

And he refers back to the Bible Word of God as he repeats the need for the Gospel as motive power to sustain Christians:

Now watch from beginning to end of the first chapter of Colossians how through it all this great thing, "be not removed from the Gospel," becomes the condition, the exercise, the motive power of the church for keeping its people faithful to the Great Day and for making them fruitful unto every good work.¹⁶

The Need of the Christian Adult to Defend His Life in Christ

Describing adults within the framework of Christian belief and the theory set forth in this paper, one could say the following things. Food and shelter are needed to sustain life. Weapons and fortresses, power and strategy are needed by the Christians to defend life in the life-long battle.

In battle the enemy is the devil. The world is his ally, possessing a spy network and skilled saboteurs in the very

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 83-84.

¹⁶Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Gospel to be Preached," CC Essays, p. 87.

flesh or nature of man including the Christian man.

The Christian could retreat, withdraw from the world, as Jansen says,

but Christianity knows that unless redeeming love can touch the world of every day it cannot touch us anywhere. Jesus prayed for his disciples, "I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one."¹⁷

A Methodist layman in Denver is quoted as saying: "It seems that we take the position that all is right with the world, so why bother to study?"¹⁸ Jesus answered that question centuries before it was asked when he told disciples at times and Pharisees at others: "Take care that no one misleads you."¹⁹ "You will then be handed over for punishment and execution; and men of all nations will hate you for your allegiance to me. Many will lose their faith; they will betray one another and hate one another."²⁰ "The man who holds out to the end will be saved."²¹ "Keep awake, then . . ."²² "Stay awake and pray that you may be spared the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."²³ You are "filled inside by

¹⁷ John Frederick Jansen, The Meaning of Baptism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 70.

¹⁸ Donald Louis Deffner, "The Church's Role in Adult Education," unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1957, p. 76.

¹⁹ Matt. 24:4

²⁰ Matt. 24:9,10

²¹ Matt. 24:13

²² Matt. 24:42; 25:13

²³ Matt. 26:41

robbery and self-indulgence."²⁴ "Inside you are brim-full of hypocrisy and crime."²⁵ "Beware, be on your guard against the leaven [the teaching--v. 12] of the Pharisees and Sadducees."²⁶ Jesus even warns in a parable: "Why be jealous because I am kind?"²⁷

The answer to weakness is strength and power, whether the battle has been against a rather obvious, but powerful direct onslaught or against the more subtle stratagems of Satan. The need of the Christian adult is again the powerful and forgiving Word, Christ, as He comes in and through the Gospel. Dr. Caemmerer puts it this way to some pastors:

Face yourself that there is not only physical but spiritual fatigue that can sap your ministry and that of your co-workers in your circuit. And then pull down Colossians, and pray the Small Catechism, Articles One and Two and Three, straight through without stopping. Then go to your favorite word of Gospel--every one of you has a different one--but go to it, your word about Jesus Christ and Him crucified, go to it and eat. And you will rise up with strength as an eagle.

Even the young men will fail, but as God speaks to us through the blood and the resurrection of His Son, we shall all mount up as eagles, and we shall find power for ourselves, for our co-workers . . . for the whole Christian church--the power of God unto salvation.²⁸

²⁴ Matt. 23:26,26

²⁵ Matt. 23:28

²⁶ Matt. 16:6,12

²⁷ Matt. 20:15

²⁸ Caemmerer, "The Gospel to be Preached," op. cit.,
CC Essays, p. 91.

The Need of the Christian Adult to Grow and Mature as a Christian

William Kramer writes that the purpose of Christian Education is primarily to help Christians in their growth toward Christian maturity. They are to grow continually in knowledge, love and service of God with their ultimate purpose to glorify God.²⁹

Included in eight basic areas of interest "constantly in the forefront of our thinking" specified by a conference of young adults were "Emotional growth and security" and "Religious and spiritual development."³⁰

This is a need of every individual Christian and of the church for each Christian. Dr. Feucht says:

As the church realizes that its total adult constituency must grow by study (discussion) and worship the church will become more and more adequate as a force, less a group of spectators, more a group of participants. (The secret is in Deut. 6:6-9; it must be in the hearts of adults before it can pass to the next generation.)³¹

Jansen claims: "If Baptism ends the way to Christ, it begins the life in Christ."³² He continues:

²⁹William A. Kramer, "What Is a Good School?," Advance, V (January, 1958), 12-13.

³⁰Young Adult Idea Book No. 1, edited by Gustav K. Wiencke (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 6. These areas are from the report of the North American Conference on Older Youth and Adults of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ of the United States of America, 1956, p. 6.

³¹Deffner, op. cit., p. 417.

³²Jansen, op. cit., p. 89.

We cannot be content, says Paul, "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

How long will that take? Is even a lifetime sufficient? Listen to Moses at the end of his life: "O Lord God, thou hast only begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand." A hundred and twenty years old--and he says that he is only beginning to see! Listen to Paul, whose life has for years been a glorious comradeship with Christ: "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own." Paul's quest for salvation had ended the day he met his Lord, but, in deeper sense, his journey began that day on the Damascus road.³³

"Continued learning is not only an older adult's opportunity; it is his necessity,"³⁴ says Ziegler, and adds:

"Spiritually, this period of life should be the most satisfying of all."³⁵ Munro thinks: "The goal will always be a church which provides with equal care carefully adapted programs for every age-group, leading to complete Christian living at each stage of growth."³⁶

The need of a Christian to grow in faith, grace, his Christianity, or in Christ is the same as saying he needs continually more complete restoration of the divine image. This occurs through encounter with God and the reception of the

³³Ibid., p. 90.

³⁴Ziegler, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁵Ibid., p. 19. He adds further: "A favorite Bible quotation for every older person might be, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'--Luke 9:62."

³⁶Harry C. Munro, The Church as a School (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, c.1929), p. 246.

"Word-made-flesh" through the Word of the Gospel (always following application of the Law, of course).

Similar to the Christian growth concept is the emphasis in progressive secular education on discovering and developing the potential of the individual (and even the group). This idea is true if understood in Christian terms. There is a need and an impulse to grow as a Christian, as a total person centered always more and more in Christ. There is a real need for every Christian to discover, develop and use his God-given and God-directed potential.

It is common to read and hear that education is never an end in itself, that education (including Christian education) is always education for something. Often what is meant is that education must be related to an activity that affects not only the person involved for his own good or his own sake, but always involving some action or some good for others beyond himself.

In the context of the theory thus far developed in this paper can it not also be argued that growth in Christ is a personal need of the Christian adult and therefore a legitimate individual goal of Christian education? Certainly Christian growth, maturing in Christ (true Christian education, as one might term it, "an end in itself") is a need of the Christian adult and therefore a genuine goal of Christian education.

Meeting this Christian growth need, accomplishing this goal (always in process, never complete, while living on this earth) pleases both God who desires it and man to whom it happens. For example, in physical, mental or emotional

development there is a pleasure and satisfaction at reaching various milestones or levels of development that is inherent in it. It is always true, of course, that more can be accomplished with the new strength or ability, but the pleasure is there even without and before accomplishing, starting or planning to do the new thing. Of course, to stop at that point and not make use of the new ability or power, or not to grow further would soon mean the loss of the ability and in God's terms would be sin not to use the new Christian maturity. Still, to grow in Christ is a worthy goal in itself.

Some educators describe growth in terms of realizing potential, as does Sherrill when he says Christian education

is distinctive because it is an education which bears witness to revelation. It testifies that God as Self discloses himself, moving in judgment and in redemption toward the human self, to the end that the existing self may become what it was created to be.³⁷

Or

to experience selfhood as man, within the limits of finiteness, is to experience the counterpart of Selfhood which is infinite. This . . . is part of the meaning which lies in the concept that man is created in the image of God.³⁸

Jesus makes the same point of realizing potential, finding the true self, gaining instead of losing--tied up always, of course, with the Word, Christ Himself. He says that if anyone wants to be a

follower of mine, he must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me. Whoever cares

³⁷Sherrill, op. cit., p. 90.

³⁸Ibid., p. 71.

for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self.³⁹

Ziegler claims: "Every time he [a Christian] learns, his capital is being invested to produce what God intended him to be."⁴⁰

Jansen refers to an experience of the prophet Ezekiel and applies it to Baptism and Christian growth and the Gospel:

The prophet can see various stages in the river's rise--first to his ankles, then to his knees, soon to his loins, and finally it is too deep to ford. Yet it is the selfsame stream that flows from the sanctuary of God.

As the full depth of the river is not immediately recognized, neither is the full import of God's grace in Baptism. We may be glad this is so, for the various stages in the river's rise correspond to the various stages of our life. God's grace does not destroy Christian growth and nurture, for God deals with us as persons, not puppets. A Christian child can early know the love of God without yet realizing and plumbing the depths of the gospel. As the child grows, his faith deepens and the river of grace assumes more depth. As he reaches confirmation the river becomes a stream to ford. The farther he goes in the Christian life the more he begins to realize the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God.⁴¹

God's grace, application of Law and Gospel, the means of grace, the Word of Christ--this is what is necessary for spiritual growth or maturing as well as for spiritual birth. The means of grace are the means of growth. The need is there for every adult Christian to grow. Or as Ziegler puts it:

³⁹Matt. 16:24,25

⁴⁰Ziegler, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Ziegler defines "capital" as "biological inheritance and ancestry." Certainly as a Christian his spiritual "capital" would be involved, too.

⁴¹Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Spiritual maturing is still a goal of older adulthood. The means of grace are available and, when regularly appropriated, provide the sustenance for growth in grace, and in all the other values of Christian living.⁴²

The Need of the Christian Adult to Respond to the Word with Worship

Peter spoke in admiration and adoration: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus responded approvingly: "You did not learn that from mortal man; it was revealed to you by my heavenly Father."⁴³ Here in utter simplicity are the basics of worship, God acting and man reacting.

George Hoyer points out that "Worship is the necessary response of man to God, the prized privilege of a child of God in Christ."⁴⁴ He explains it this way:

When we have come to know the truth, we do something about it. God is the supreme Truth. We who have been born again in Christ know God. Knowing that Truth, we do something about Him. We worship. Worship is because God is.⁴⁵

He describes the essential ingredients:

God provides the impetus for worship. That is the first of the essential ingredients in worship. God begins the worship cycle by the impetus of His love to us in Jesus Christ. That love reaches us in the first action of the Holy Ghost on our lives--whether He is active in the heard Word or in Holy Baptism. He stirs us to action which is the first motion in

⁴²Ziegler, op. cit., p. 129.

⁴³Matt. 16:16,17

⁴⁴George W. Hoyer, Faith's First Response, edited by Robert Hoyer (Bible Discussion Guide, Adult Department, Course 5; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1956), p. 3.

⁴⁵Ibid.

our sinful stillness--that is faith. God sets the wheel of our dead, motionless life spinning with the gracious, downward stroke of His hand as He places His Son into the manger and onto the cross, or as He brings this same loving act to us through the Word. Our faith, our believing, is this new life in motion in us. We begin to live in God--we who were dead in trespasses. We begin to move, to spin. We move by God's impetus. We believe.

This is the second essential of worship--faith!⁴⁶

He describes worship, the response:

Worship is man's response to God. If faith is man in living motion at the impetus of the living God, then worship is faith's response. God starts the motion with the downward strokes of His grace, and we respond with upward motions of our faith--worship. God talks His Word to us, and what is faith's first response? Worship! Flying off the other side of the arc of our life's wheel, as if by centrifugal force generated by the loving acts of God, comes faith's first response--worship!⁴⁷

He defines worship:

Worship is the faithful's response to God's love in Christ, which is given through the Word and Sacrament, expressed individually or corporately, in living with our neighbor or in action toward God.⁴⁸

This "action toward God" is further defined as "adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication toward God."⁴⁹

Worship is expressing to God in faith (not despair or defiance) the thoughts and feelings of the Christian. This, of course, can best be done after hearing and appropriating the Word of Christ, for the Word, Christ, by His presence--and the Holy

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 61f.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 60.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 58.

Spirit, also present and active--will help shape the response of sacrificial worship.

Hoyer describes a broader (life as worship) and a narrower (the worship life) response of worship:

Worship is our response to God. That can mean life as worship or the worship life. In both instances it is our response to God. Everything that a Christian does should be done in love that responds to the love of God in Christ. Then that life is worship. But the adoration of God, the confessing to God, the thanksgiving, and the supplication--these things of the worship life are in a special sense our response to God.⁵⁰

Hoyer points out further:

We do not only want to get things from God--forgiveness and instruction; we want to give to the Lord the glory due unto His name. . . . "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so," wrote the Psalmist.⁵¹

"Worship must also be action. . . . It must also be something we give to God. . . . It is obvious that his worship of God can come about only as a result of the knowledge of God and the grace of God which we receive from Him."⁵²

Worship, sacrificial worship directed to God, is an expression to Him of the feelings the Christian has. The simple joy and satisfaction of growth in Christ mentioned previously may be expressed directly to God in adoration ("What a wonderful God! How happy I am to know Him and be

⁵⁰George W. Hoyer, Faith's First Response, edited by Robert Hoyer (Teacher's Manual to the Bible Discussion Guide, Adult Department, Course 5; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1956), p. 3.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 43.

⁵²George W. Hoyer, Faith's First Response, Bible Discussion Guide, p. 58.

known by Him!") or confession ("Lord, I have not used the indwelling Word in my life's attitudes and actions to the fullest as I ought and want.") or thanksgiving ("Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, for forgiveness, for growth, for the gift of Thyself!") or supplication for self and/or others ("Lord, help me to use the power and wisdom in Thy gracious gift of the Word of Life and make my whole life a life of worship-response to Thee directly and through helping others with Thy Gospel-Word.").

Jesus said: "You are light for all the world. . . . And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellows, so that, when they see the good you do, they may give praise to your Father in heaven."⁵³ As a response to two healing miracles of Jesus, the people rightly "were filled with awe at the sight, and praised God for granting such authority to men,"⁵⁴ and "they gave praise to the God of Israel."⁵⁵

Hoyer points to this same point as well as the difficulty of doing so plus something on God's Word-impetus answer when he says:

The difficulties of all forms of worship must be overcome by God's impetus. We find we need help especially to adore and to confess. Worship--from "worth-ship"--reminds us that we need to recognize the worthiness of God. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and

⁵³Matt. 5:14,16

⁵⁴Matt. 9:8

⁵⁵Matt. 15:31

glory and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). When we recognize His worth, we see our lack of it and our need of forgiveness.⁵⁶

The answer again is God's Word, the means of grace, Law and Gospel, the sacramental (from God to people) impetus doing its work as the tool of the Holy Spirit to defend and sustain man and to cause him to grow in Him and respond to Him in direct worship (the worship life) and through life as worship and life as service, bringing the Word to others that God may be glorified in them, too. Hoyer says this in his own fine style and way in a final quote:

The means of grace as the Sacramental worship impetus must be the power which moves a man into a more Christian life. But knowledge alone is not the answer--and the Sacrificial worship life serves as the door into the more Christian life. The sacrificial exercise plows the ground for a better crop from the seed of the Word and Sacrament, until finally, in the mercy of God, we bring forth an hundredfold. A man begins by beginning! This is so easy to say, so easy to say and to excuse for not doing!⁵⁷

And

The solution to Christian mediocrity lies not so much in introducing an idea that will change the shape of a person's thinking--he already knows the ideas; but in making possible the further work of the Spirit already in him and the grace already his. It is the worship life that helps to make this possible.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Hoyer, Faith's First Response, Bible Discussion Guide, p. 11. See also the Douglas Steere quote, p. 21.

⁵⁷Hoyer, Faith's First Response, Teacher's Manual to the Bible Discussion Guide, p. 70; Hoyer says further: "It is so easy to relax in the status to which we have been raised by God's grace, so easy to forget, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.'"

⁵⁸Hoyer, Faith's First Response, Bible Discussion Guide, p. 43.

Faith's first response to the impact of God as received through His Gospel Word will be (there is a "short-circuit" if it is otherwise) direct sacrificial worship. But no healthy worship response would ever stop there.⁵⁹ It goes on to--the subject of the next section.

The Need of the Adult Christian to Respond to the Word with Service

Living the Christian life, "life as worship," edifying and nurturing others, witnessing and proclaiming the Word of Christ to non-Christians, loving the neighbor, bearing fruits of repentance, the doing of Christian welfare and Christian service are all included in this section. They are different ways of saying the same thing, or parts of the same thing--responding to the Word of God's love in Christ in service and ministry to others with the intent that they (and all people) are helped in their relationship with God, respond and glorify Him.

This process is worship if it is done to and because of God and His Word of love in Christ. It is ministry, it is helpful, if it benefits someone, if it channels God's love, *αγαπη*, to them. It will be concerned about the welfare (the

⁵⁹Hoyer, Faith's First Response, Teacher's Manual to the Bible Discussion Guide, p. 19 says: "Sacrificial worship, faith's first response, is the important first step in life as worship. If he is going to be a living Christian, he will be a worshiping Christian." And p. 29: "Worship is not so much that we receive from God as that we give to God. We must learn to give the sacrificial response repeatedly, in worship service after service, and continuously in life as worship."

spiritual and total welfare) of people, all people, the ones God created and redeemed through Christ the Word.⁶⁰ It is action and/or words (showing the Word and the image of God behind it and in it) concerned with helping build the Body of Christ from within and without. Hoyer says:

Worship . . . involves receiving more of Christ through His means of grace; it involves the movement of faith that shows the new life, and includes the response of that faith that proves its life; it includes the recognition of our membership in one body and our obligation to be of service to every brother; it recognizes that all of life must be lived to God out of love for God.⁶¹

There are two aspects to the acting, responding, serving adult Christian's position: (1) He is servant-slave of God, totally committed to a life lived wholly to God, gladly and willingly; and (2) As servant-slave (soldier, child) of God he has been placed into, become part of the Body of Christ, the Church, and has both a co-working relationship with the other members and a responsibility to and for them and their welfare.

Dr. Franzmann emphasizes the first of these aspects when he discusses the "personal character of interpretation as response to revelation." He explains:

It is personal, not in the sense that it is individualistic, self-willed, arbitrary; Scripture itself warns us against such an attitude in

⁶⁰Kenneth Dexter Miller, Man and God in the City (New York: Friendship Press, c.1954), p. 96, rightly points out that for the Christian church, all God's children are "our kind of people."

⁶¹Hoyer, Faith's First Response, Teacher's Manual to the Bible Discussion Guide, p. 56.

interpretation (2 Peter 1:20). It is personal in the sense that it involves the whole person of the baptized man. The attitude of the interpreter is the attitude of the man who has gone into death in Christ and has emerged into the newness of a life lived wholly to God, the man who in proud humility wears the kindly yoke of the Son of God. The whole person of the baptized man includes his intellect, the intellect that God the Creator gave him, the brains that God the Redeemer has redeemed.⁶²

James Smart points out the power and reward of such a life of service:

There is no entrance for us into our true ministry unless we die with Him and rise with Him into that newness of life which in His risen power He shares with those who are bonded together in fellowship with Him. And the reward of our ministry is just this--that He should count us worthy to be taken into fellowship with Him and to be members of His Body.⁶³

The Word of the Gospel is all-important in this need of man, too. When the Church (as individuals and together as the Body of Christ) "lives and works under the lordship of Jesus Christ" then "Christian or Gospel things happen." Coiner says that and adds: "People will reach toward ends which are

⁶²Martin H. Franzmann, "Revelation--Scripture--Interpretation," CC Essays, p. 67. He adds: "If, after doing the necessary linguistic and historical work, we still find Scripture hard to understand and to apply, there is one great, fearful question which we must ask ourselves. That question is: Do we want to understand it--or are we afraid to understand it, lest, having understood, we must obey it? The Son has set us free; interpretation is the exercise of that free sonship. It therefore grows on the soil of repentance and works by love," p. 68.

⁶³Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," CC Essays, p. 99.

Christian when they are under the Gospel and open to the working of the Holy Spirit."⁶⁴ On the other hand

If you are distracted or side-tracked by unworthy quarrels, beliefs, or practices, your flesh will take over and you will be timid and weak for the battle, vessels unfit for noble use, not ready for those good works which God planned for you to do.⁶⁵

In his book on Baptism Jansen points out the validity and importance of this for all Christians in these words:

God knows us "by name." He sees us, seeks us, saves us as persons. We are never statistics to God. This awareness is basic not only to a sense of salvation but to a true sense of vocation. Minister and missionary are not the only persons "called" by God. Every man's life is to be a plan of God.⁶⁶

Jesus Himself made this point of doing God's will through responsible action toward the neighbor in unmistakable terms. He pointed out that the greatest commandment in the Law was to love God and the second, like unto it, was to love the neighbor. And to emphasize it He added: "Everything in the Law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments."⁶⁷ Earlier He had said: "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you: that is the Law and the prophets."⁶⁸ And "Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of Heaven,

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 97.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 95.

⁶⁶Jansen, op. cit., p. 40.

⁶⁷Matt. 22:40

⁶⁸Matt. 7:12

but only those who do the will of my heavenly Father."⁶⁹ "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters."⁷⁰ In telling the parable of the talents, Jesus emphasized that they are given to be used for God's business. To those who did make good use of them He said: "Come and share in your master's delight."⁷¹ And to the one who buried it He ordered: "Fling the useless servant out."⁷² Jesus made the point explicit and pointed to His own life and attitude as example:

Among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever would be first must be the willing slave of all--like the Son of Man; he did not come to be served, but to serve, and to surrender his life as a ransom for many.⁷³

All of this, of course, underscores the fact that living this Christian life of service is living in the image of God, the incarnate Word Himself present and potent within the Christian.

Jesus also warns His disciples to be on their guard. They will be persecuted. They will be given the words necessary for them to speak as God's true disciples or servants. If persecuted, they should move on, but at the same time be content to share their Master's lot (even to being called a

⁶⁹Matt. 7:21

⁷⁰Matt. 12:30

⁷¹Matt. 25:21,23

⁷²Matt. 25:30

⁷³Matt. 20:26

devil). They are not to be afraid in their service. Rather they should speak loud in broad daylight and shout from the house-tops. Their job is to acknowledge Christ before men, not always bringing peace to the earth, rather often a sword (and there will be hatred in families). But they are to take up their crosses and walk in the footsteps of Christ.⁷⁴ When it is needed, relief will be granted by Christ, so "Bend your necks to my yoke, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble-hearted; and your souls will find relief. For my yoke is good to bear, my load is light."⁷⁵ Martin Luther put the paradox this way: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."⁷⁶

There are basically three general avenues or areas of service: (1) Fellow Christians, those of the "household of faith"; (2) Non-Christians, those without faith, without Christ, the Word, without hope; and (3) The community or everyone in general (includes "1" and "2").

The service rendered in all three areas will be done "as unto God" as worship and because of God's gracious Word, a response to it, a response in it. It will also be a matter of Christian love for the ones being served, the love coming from God in Christ the Word in the first place to and through the one

⁷⁴Cf. Matt. 10:17-42

⁷⁵Matt. 11:28f.

⁷⁶Quoted by Jansen, op. cit., p. 19.

serving. Number "1" is generally termed Christian education or sanctification; "2" is usually called missions or justification; and "3" has been something of a step-child, perhaps has no real name yet. It would include social welfare, being a good citizen and neighbor, general (rather than specifically Christian) education, hospitals and other care of the physically, mentally and emotionally ill, and everything else that would promote the general welfare and government of the community and the world. Numbers "1" and "2" would make direct use of the Gospel Word as *κῆρυγμα* and *διδάχη*.⁷⁷ Number "3" would not make direct use of the Word, but a Christian will do all to the glory of God and as a response to His Word. He would try to make this clear as nicely and often as possible.

Numbers "1" and "2" may be something like driving a truck loaded with treasure down a road to a destination. Number "3" would then be similar to building and repairing that and similar roads together with all kinds of people who have all kinds of purposes and uses in mind for the roads. This action is still in the realm of *ὑπάπη*.

All of these actions are meant to be areas of service for the servant-disciple of Christ. He has a need to be doing

⁷⁷Cf. Richard R. Caemmerer, "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (April, 1961), 197-208.

these, and to be doing them for the right reason.⁷⁸ Otherwise he is falling far short of his potential, is displaying an incomplete image of God, and will be dissatisfied, unhappy, unsure, weak and sinful (instead of being filled with God, the Word made flesh) in every area of life.

Lutherans have much to learn in all three areas. A non-Lutheran writes:

The Protestant churches can no longer airily dismiss the Pentecostal groups as "emotional sects." We can all learn much from them as to missionary zeal, their sense of stewardship, and their development of a genuine fellowship of committed Christians.

The response to such a ministry is its own reward. Thus a missionary in a Chinese Baptist church in San Francisco writes: "Christianity is a way of life, and demands, out of a heart overflowing with love and gratitude, the entire life of a person. The evidence of a true religion is when one reaches out hungrily to his fellow men."⁷⁹

Dr. Franzmann puts it this way: "We have not used this Word of God [the Bible] fully if it has not both deepened our doctrine and heightened our missionary zeal."⁸⁰

Dr. Caemmerer comments on this and current Protestant thinking in regard to the "value of the individual," the

⁷⁸Cf. Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," CC Essays, pp. 93f.: "In church activity we must watch what we are doing and pray for grace while we are doing it, else what we do can become quite irrelevant and irreverent. Our life in the church is always in grace and in faith. By God's grace we are the church, and in faith that which we do in the church pleases God. In our human weakness and sin we are so easily led by Satan into the terrible treason of doing the right thing for the wrong reason."

⁷⁹Miller, op. cit., p. 106f.

⁸⁰Franzmann, "Revelation--Scripture--Interpretation," CC Essays, p. 90f.

Christian's calling in life ("to love people"), the place of the Gospel and the church as the body of Christ in this excerpt:

Many Protestants . . . are saying, "Marxism forgets the value of the individual; we must remember the value of the individual." All right. Jesus Christ died for each one of us. The Holy Spirit knocks at the door of each one of us with the message of His Cross. But that isn't the end. We have been called by that message into one body, says Colossians. Our people have been drawn together to love one another. Their calling in life is to love people, many of whom they have never seen, in missions on the other side of the globe. They are in the business not just of loving God for the sake of raising a budget, but they are called by God to love people, one another, with a love that is the perfect bond of virtues. Make the body of Christ, the membership of the individual member of the church to each other one, a potent, powerful meaning for your people; but to that end preach--preach the Gospel of God, by which Jesus Christ has called us as members into this body.⁸¹

Jesus said to Peter and Andrew: "Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men."⁸² Jansen writes: "It is supremely the task of pulpit and pew to bear relevant witness to the redemptive word of God."⁸³ And how should pulpit and pew do this? By hearing the same Word to keep them equipped: "The Word of Christ keeps men fit for mutual responsibility in the church, which is the body of Christ."⁸⁴

⁸¹Caemmerer, "The Gospel to be Preached," CC Essays, p. 90f.

⁸²Matt. 4:19

⁸³Jansen, op. cit., p. 14.

⁸⁴Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching for the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1959), p. 191.

"I bear branded on my body the owner's stamp of the Lord Jesus," wrote St. Paul to the Galatians.⁸⁵ Jansen comments, "Paul's figure is that of a slave branded with his master's name so that no one can ignore the mark of lordship that is indelibly impressed upon him."⁸⁶ William Reed rightly says: "Our position is such that we cannot be neutral. Our life cannot be one of harmless obscurity. We must either repel or attract--save or ruin souls."⁸⁷

Jesus said: "Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, sister, mother."⁸⁸ And after calling Peter and Andrew, He saw James and John. "He called them, and at once they left the boat and their father, and followed Him." Then "He went round the whole of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and curing whatever illness or infirmity there was among the people" [underlining added].⁸⁹ That is "1" and "2" and "3" in essence as outlined above.

There yet remains (short of a much longer exposition) only to say and underline again what the power is and from where it comes to motivate and enable such a life of service to others. Coiner says it well when he writes:

⁸⁵Gal. 6:17 (Moffatt), quoted as chapter heading in Jansen, op. cit., p. 17.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 18.

⁸⁷H. J. Eggold, Jr., "Hearing and Telling the Word," CC Essays, p. 77.

⁸⁸Matt. 12:50

⁸⁹Matt. 4:22f. [underlining added] Cf. also Matt. 9:35

The church's life begins with God, and the unceasing movement of God into His people through the gracious and active work of the Holy Spirit brings growth in unity, love, and steadfastness. The people of the world know nothing of the nature of this life at all. They give themselves over to selfishness, self-gratification, and exploitation. But Christians are in possession of new life, with power to live it, and this life becomes a witness to the lordship of Christ.⁹⁰

Dr. Caemmerer said it well, too:

So let us use the imperatives as the Bible sets them before us. Love one another! Colossians Three has whole lists like that. . . . But as you use those imperatives, never, never on pain of death, your own and the death of your people, sever from those imperatives the power pack that makes it possible for the people to follow them [the Word of the Gospel, of course].⁹¹

Finally, as a summary of the whole thesis thus far:

St. Paul is saying to us in Colossians and 2 Timothy: "Get with the risen Christ and His Gospel. Get under His grace and power. Don't dare try to do anything in the church unless you trust all the way in what has happened to you in your baptism and what Christ will work in you through Word and Sacrament. Derive your life and activity from Him. Get your direction and power from Him. He is the Head of the body, the First-born from the dead. From the risen Christ life flows out through all the members of His body. Your faith and obedience and quiet service are nourished by the forgiveness of sins and the reality of baptism which kills the old man and creates the new man who comes forth daily to face with joy the doing of the Word of God [the work of Christ Himself]."⁹²

⁹⁰Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," CC Essays, p. 98.

⁹¹Caemmerer, "The Gospel to be Preached," CC Essays, p. 90.

⁹²Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," CC Essays, p. 94.

CHAPTER IV

THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The General Aim

Aim is important. "The marksman who shoots without taking aim, usually hits what he aims at--nothing."¹ And "aim automatically determines the material and method."²

Sherrill warns, however, against statements of highly specific "outcomes." He says:

The more specific the aims become, the more surely are we drawn into the business of trying to predetermine for others what their behavior and what their feelings should be; and then accordingly the more inevitably are we drawn into manipulating them to make this come true. How are we then to avoid the opposite and rejected extreme of adopting an education which professes to have no aim outside the process of interaction itself?

To avoid both perils means keeping the situation of the presently existing self at the center of concern. And it means that the principal changes which are the subject of concern are changes in the depths of the self instead of those which are at the periphery of the self. Here the concept of revelation as confrontation takes on especial significance for Christian education.³

The confronting is one of a Person who offers himself in love and judgment and calls upon people to give themselves a living sacrifice in response. "It is a matter of personal communion.

¹Joseph A. Weigand, The Catechist and the Catechumen (New York: Benziger Brother, c.1924), p. 14.

²Johann Michael Reu, Catechetics, (3rd edition; Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1931), p. 273.

³Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 83.

If this is the core of revelation, so must it be the core of Christian education."⁴

A Christian Education Rally Day Service bulletin says: "We seek to achieve the ultimate purpose of Christian education . . . the love, praise, and glory of God."⁵ In discussing the grouping of adults Ziegler refers to Ephesians 2:19-22 as "a profound picture of a Christian group" and adds: "We Christians must never rest content to group adults without keeping before us the main objective of our work--to build them 'for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.'"⁶ A workshop of Lutheran educators affirmed: "The chief aim [of Lutheran Bible Institutes] should always be to train people for service to Christ."⁷ Jansen talks of "responsible selfhood."⁸

All of the above are really aspects or facets of what Caemmerer points out: having and showing (bearing and baring) the image of God, receiving and sharing the Word of God made flesh through the Word of the Gospel, the means of grace.

⁴Ibid., p. 84.

⁵"Education for Eternity," A Christian Rally Day Service (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1958]), p. 4.

⁶Earl F. Ziegler, Christian Education of Adults (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 85. He adds: "This is a tested theology for grouping adults."

⁷Christian Adult Education, A Workshop Report, held at Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois, (July 7-11, 1947), (St. Louis: By the Board for Parish Education, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States), p. 24. Hereafter this report will be referred to as CAE Workshop.

⁸John Frederick Jansen, The Meaning of Baptism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 18.

In terms of "outcome" and witness, perhaps this slightly longer description is not far from a statement of aim (even though it doesn't use all or much of the terminology that has been stressed thus far in the thesis):

To sum up: If we are to reach the wistful pagans of our cities with a vital faith, the complacent, self-satisfied, stereotyped, stodgy, inward looking, intellectually sterile, socially fearful, one class church must give way to a live, imaginative, restless, outward looking, socially adventuresome, intellectually alert, inclusive church, ready to meet all the needs of all the people of the community in the name and in the spirit of Christ. Only thus will the city church have a chance to win the allegiance of those presently outside it.⁹

Some Attempts by Others at Specific Objectives

Typical (and anemic in the light of this study) of so many lists of the "Purposes and Aims of a Bible Class" or similar groups that have come from Lutheran circles is this one from the workshop of Lutheran educators cited above:

- a. Gaining knowledge of the Bible and ability to use that knowledge.
- b. Gaining a growing conception of Christ and of Christian doctrine.
- c. Receiving spiritual guidance in meeting the everyday problems of life.
- d. Learning more about Christian service and engaging in it more fully.
- e. Enjoying Christian fellowship with others of like ideals and inclinations.¹⁰

⁹Kenneth Dexter Miller, Man and God in the City (New York: Friendship Press, c.1954), p. 97.

¹⁰CAE Workshop, p. 20. In treating "The Aims and Scope of Adult Education," the section on general aims is a bit weak, while that on specific aims is very good! Ibid., pp. 12ff.

A list of reasons for working with adults by the same workshop group starts out strongly enough but weakens as it progresses:

1. To help adult Christians grow spiritually.
2. To help adults face life with spiritual resources.
3. To strengthen Christian elementary education.
4. To help build Christian homes.
5. To give the church more lay-workers.
6. To lift the stewardship of the church.
7. To help prevent further losses.
8. To stem worldliness.¹¹

Under "I. Objectives:" in the chapter "Standards for Bible Classes" the same workshop lists:

1. To reveal Christ to the student as his personal Savior.
2. To increase in the student an ever-growing desire to serve Christ in the fulness of Christian life.
3. To help the student discover the treasures of heavenly wisdom in the Scriptures and assist him in the use of the Bible as his only infallible guide in solving all personal questions of faith and life.
4. To nurture the students' growth in a life of sanctification in this world, and prepare him for eternal life in the world to come.¹²

Perhaps a critique of this last list in terms of the propositions of this thesis would help to clarify what valid objectives would and would not be.

Numbers "1" and "3" in the last list above are not valid objectives of adult Christian education in general nor of Bible Classes in particular. This is not $\delta\epsilon\delta\alpha\chi\eta$.¹³ The

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 42.

¹³Cf. Richard R. Caemmerer, "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (April, 1961), 197-208.

Christian already has Christ revealed to him and indeed living within him. His need is to grow in Christ through His Word of forgiveness and salvation, to be sure, but not to have him "revealed" as such. The idea in "3" of "discovering treasures" and using the Bible as a guide to solve personal questions is a mis-emphasis for the Bible, the Word of God that is there as proclamation, Law-and-Gospel Word--not as a (in the normally understood sense) wisdom book or guide book of morals and ethics. The Bible is not intended to be something akin to Confucius' sayings. Numbers "2" and "4" in the same list could also be much more adequately stated.

Also grossly inadequate according to the propositions of this thesis (but fairly typical in Lutheran and other Christian circles) is the statement further on in the report under "V. The Class:" "3. Members must be taught to apply the truths of God's Word in their lives."¹⁴ It would not be the truths that need to be applied to people's lives, but rather the Truth, Jesus Christ, that needs to live in people--more and more.

On the other hand some people in that same workshop alluded to produced a very fine brief statement of the aims of parent education--fine in the light of this study:

1. To enrich the spiritual life of the parents.
2. To help them better understand and appreciate their children.
3. To provide skills for their best nurture and training.

¹⁴CAE Workshop, p. 42.

4. To help make personal and family worship increasingly effective.
5. To lift the entire spirit and purpose of the home.¹⁵

Specific goals for a particular group should reflect ("be a grass-roots statement"¹⁶ says Ziegler) the objectives of the congregation and of Christ.¹⁷

Specific Objectives in Terms of the Needs

The objectives of adult Christian education should be spelled out in direct apposition to the needs. The needs of a Christian remade in the image of God through the gracious Word of Christ were outlined in Chapter III of this thesis. If he is to function as a Christian (and that is the reason he is still alive), then he needs the Law-and-Gospel Word of God applied to him and the various aspects of his life. He needs to understand and appreciate the life in Christ he is living. He needs the ability and the will to live freely as a slave of Christ's showing forth His praises in every attitude and action.

To Sustain

His need is for sustenance of the Christ in his life. Otherwise he will die to God and live completely in sin again.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁶Ziegler, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁷For a rather clear, concise, apt statement of the Roman Catholic Aims of Religious Instruction, cf. Weigand, op. cit., p. 14.

The objective: that the Holy Spirit use and that men (including the man himself) apply the means of grace, the means of sustenance, God's Law and God's Gospel to this man in his need and that thus through the coming of the Word (Christ) in the Word (Gospel) he will continue to live in Christ and Christ in him. "Feeding on the Word" is a phrase that is very apropos in this connection.

To Defend

The need of the adult Christian is also for defense of the indwellingness, power and activity of Christ in his life. Otherwise he will be overpowered by the forces of evil and his latter state will be worse than his first. The objectives: that the Holy Spirit use and that men (including the man himself) apply the means of grace, the means or weapons of defense, the Law and Gospel Word of God to this man in his need and that through the increase of the Word of forgiveness Christ the Word, God, will remain with him and there shall no evil interfere with or weaken that indwelling. The Gospel armor of Ephesians chapter six fits here.

To Grow

The need of the adult Christian is to grow as a Christian, to grow in the grace and power of God, to grow in Christ Himself. Otherwise he is liable to stagnate, become bored and disinterested in his relationship with Christ. Opportunities commensurate with his potential will frustrate instead of

excite and satisfy him. Worship and service will become a chore and an unpleasant duty, rather than the expression of Christ and the image of God and the peace and joy and hope and other attitudes Christ gives in ever-increasing abundance as He increases and the Christian grows through the preaching and teaching, the contact (and the Holy Spirit's use of it) of the means-of-grace Word. The objective: that the Holy Spirit use and that men (including the man himself) apply the means of grace, the means of growth, God's Law and Gospel to this man in his need and that thus through the constant consumption of the Word of grace, the indwelling Word Christ will grow within him, taking more and more possession of his life. It is thus that the relationship between Christ and the Christian grows and the Christian himself grows as a Christian. His faith, his trust, his willingness, his appreciation, his worship, his service, all grow as he grows and are expressions of this growth directed to God directly or to God through men. The Biblical terms "nurture" and "maturing" and "growing up in all things in Christ" are connected with this need and its apposite objective. This may well be termed the keystone or fulcrum objective in Christian education, particularly adult Christian education. The "confirmation complex" and the language changeover are historical factors that seem to have increased the problem and helped make this area probably the real "bottleneck" for adult Christian education in the local Lutheran congregations.

To Worship

The next need of the adult Christian is to respond to God and His grace in sacrificial worship directed to God. This can, is and should be done alone and in groups. This is man's part of the continuing conversation with God who lives in him. God made man to respond and converse. Not to do so is worse than just being rude, which is also an expression of a relationship--a very weak one, a broken one, or a lack of one. If the relationship is really there, if God has entered man with His grace and spoken with him, a response will come forth and the conversation continue and the relationship grow. Otherwise, if the response is stifled, the conversation becomes completely one-sided or ended and the relationship weakened and eventually broken. The objective: that the Holy Spirit use and that men (including the man himself) apply the sacramental Word (spoken or visible) of God to this man in his need and that the man respond to the gracious Word of the Word (Christ) of God in worship communications (attitudes, words and actions) of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication for self and others. Prayer is a large part of this.

To Serve

The last need of the adult Christian (the last in logical progression but no less important in the circle of objectives and needs of the total man in Christ) is to respond to God and His love in Christ. This response amounts to channeling God

and His love, sharing Him by loving and helping (as the Christ in him does and moves him to do) the neighbor, all people, beginning (but not stopping) with the immediate family and the "household of faith."

This serving action in Christian love means helping others by teaching Christ, proclaiming Christ (witnessing), or doing anything else out of loving concern for the welfare of people and to the praise of God. Otherwise the power that comes with Christ and growth in Him is not exercised. Spiritual "muscles" get weak, and self-righteous, self-satisfied, home-made, non-productive spiritual "fat" puts a burden on and bogs down the whole spiritual operation and relation within the man, not to mention the people weakened or lost because the image of God was covered over and did not result in praise to God. The second table of the Law of God outlines the symptoms and manifestations of sin and Satan in this connection.

The objective: that the Holy Spirit use and that men (including the man himself) apply the Law-and-Gospel Word of God to this man in his need to serve and that the man respond to the loving Word of the Word whose name is Love in loving concern and help for all people. In this concern the Gospel Word of God will always be implicit and as often as possible explicit and shared and applied to people to help them in their needs as have been outlined above.

These needs are common to man. The Christian man is put in fellowship with God and with his fellow Christians to work

together: (1) As a "mutual edification society," applying Law and Gospel to each other and receiving its application to themselves; (2) As witnesses and heralds of the Word to those who do not have Him (the Word); and (3) As those concerned with doing all they can for the welfare of their neighbors and the glory and praise of God.

Training in the Skills Necessary in or Useful to Communicating the Word

Equipping the saints for the work of ministering is the task and privilege of the church. It is an objective that must be fulfilled if the image of God is to be restored in men and God's name glorified. The real act of equipping is done by the Holy Spirit when the Law-and-Gospel Word of God is applied to and understood by a Christian, and the Holy Spirit uses it to accomplish Christian objectives. Getting this Word of God in meaningful contact with Christians is the real work of Christian education.

However, when all this has been said over and again and in a hundred different ways until the point is caught and accepted, there still remain skills to be learned¹⁸ and training to be done to develop these skills so that the Word can be

¹⁸Cf. Harry G. Coiner, Teaching the Word to Adults (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1962), p. 38: "Learning also means change in skills. The learner becomes more proficient in performing certain tasks, doing certain things. He may gain ability to express ideas more clearly, to become a better member of his family or a better citizen of his community."

properly applied¹⁹ and understood and the Holy Spirit do His work and the Word-made-flesh be imparted and increase in the Christian. Within this frame of reference, then, come the following thoughts and objectives, and implications for adult Christian education and for Christian education by adults (on each other and on children, even as children can also educate--apply the Word to--adults).

This is not meant as an exhaustive list or treatment, but by way of example some of the skills that would be necessary or desirable to develop follow. The adult Christian will want to know intellectually what Law and Gospel are,²⁰ their purpose, how to distinguish between them, how to apply them to particular situations, how the Holy Spirit uses them to communicate the Word (Christ) to people to sustain, defend, nurture them and impel them to respond in worship and service, as well as knowing the Spirit's use of them in Christian witness and the process of justification. Meaningful practice

¹⁹Ibid., p. 113, warns too: "Methods [and skills] should never be allowed to become ends in themselves. They are always the means to the end of more effective teaching and learning of the Word of God. That is to say, a method is only a procedure by which God's Word is brought and taught to people."

²⁰Cf. C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, translated from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 9. Dr. Walther states, for example, that conscience preaches the Law to the individual at all times. Therefore a valid objective in Christian education would be to sharpen the conscience of the Christian adult so that the Law of God would reach and convict him and make him desire the Word of the Gospel."

in these skills of using Law and Gospel rightly is needed if they are to be used correctly--or at all.

The skills necessary to productive Bible reading and interpretation need to be learned by the mature adult Christian: the very ability to read (if necessary), at least a survey knowledge of the contents, purpose and use of the Bible (including its absolute dependability, a clear and correct summary of doctrine, and ability to apply its Law-and-Gospel message to self and others in contemporary settings), the use of various versions for various types of work with the Bible, the use of concordances, commentaries, Bible dictionaries and other tools of the interpreter, and the principles of hermeneutics.²¹

A basic knowledge of church history and the history of doctrine and comparative religions would provide the Christian adult more skill in understanding what God means and does not mean and what people are like.

Psychology, counseling techniques, and group procedures are samples of knowledge in the generally accepted secular meaning that could help make the Christian more skillful in recognizing sin and its symptoms in self and others and in getting them to see it. This could help a Christian apply

²¹Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 94, who says: "Introducing persons to the Bible, then, is one of the principal functions to be performed by the Christian community in its educational work. But because of the tension between the Bible and the church to which we have just alluded, and for other reasons as well, it has proved surprisingly difficult to establish sound principles for the use of the Bible in Christian education."

the Law of God more readily and understandably, which is necessary before the Gospel can be applied and do its work, help people and glorify God.

Certain habits if learned may help to free the mind of the adult Christian for the work of applying the Word or may provide regular opportunity for spiritual nourishment or worship or service. Professor W. O. Kraeft says: "Learning is profoundly affected by our emotional set. Learning may need to involve our habits and skills."²² Ziegler underscores this and offers hope when he says:

Our efforts at adult Christian education are hampered often by the failure of persons to have learned what they should have in their earlier aging. But the case is not hopeless. Adults can learn what they failed earlier to master; thus they can catch up on themselves.²³

Sherrill warns that while habit is certainly often "an ally of the good" it also often acts as a brake or "the enemy of the better."²⁴

²²CAE Workshop, p. 14.

²³Ziegler, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁴Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 160ff. "In considering the responses of the self within the encounter it is well to distinguish between accustomed responses which have become more or less habitual, and new responses which the self has not hitherto been able to make. As for the accustomed responses, it is to be expected that, other things being equal, the accustomed situation will call forth the accustomed responses. Habit thus becomes an ally of the good, and yet at the same time it threatens to become the enemy of the better.

The story of religion is full of instances where habits set up under the religious sanction have indeed yielded certain gains, and yet have served also to prevent the divine confrontation from breaking up the shell of impoverished religious customs which one has woven around himself to keep

Every "man who belongs to God" should be "efficient and equipped for good work of every kind," God inspired Paul to write to Timothy, and "every inspired scripture has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, or for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that"²⁵ the Christian man is equipped.

The local Lutheran congregation is often referred to as something of a filling station--especially the Sunday morning worship service and Sunday school activities. It is that as through pastor, choir, teachers, pupils and everyone the Word of the Gospel is preached and taught to fill all with the Word of God, Jesus Christ. But the church (the congregation as it meets) is also a training center to teach these skills and train people in their use.²⁶ The program of the congregation

himself from being disturbed. Often this state of things passes for 'peace of mind,' and whatever disturbs it is viewed as a danger to religion. Hence any efforts in Christian education which set out to 'build habits' need to be kept under constant, constructive criticism.

"As for the new responses which the self makes within the encounter, it is these especially which point to changes in the self, as compared with accustomed responses which are repeated. We seem justified in saying that one purpose of divine confrontation is to continue to produce new responses. God in his Self-giving is constantly calling the self forward into newness and toward wholeness."

²⁵2 Tim. 3:16f.

²⁶Cf. Dr. Oscar Feucht's answer to questions on aims and objectives for Christian adults quoted in Donald L. Deffner, "The Church's Role in Adult Education," unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1957, p. 416, especially: "5) Help Christian people fulfill their mission in life in view of eternal values and to this end give them attitudes, knowledge, necessary skills.

"14) Sending more aware Christian citizens into the community who have a larger background and know-how for intelligent Christian action."

will take both these aspects into account. A third aspect is that it is also very much to be part of the scene of Christian response-action and will seek to provide plenty of opportunity to put the skills and the power (the Word) to work in worship and service. But this is the topic for the final chapter of this study.

The Place and Use of "Education" as Generally Understood

Christian education in general (and elementary and secondary education especially) includes more than has been mentioned above. It also rightly includes learning all that is necessary or desirable for the support and wants of the body, mind and emotions. It includes reading, writing and arithmetic, physical and social education and health care, the development of the reason, speaking ability, and vocational training, music and the arts and the sciences. These usually are not directly linked with getting the Word of the Gospel to people, but are rather part of the third area of service or ministry--being part of God's plan for the welfare and day-to-day existence and pleasure of the total man. This existence is never complete, of course, unless the man is living in Christ and Christ in him. "Man shall not live by bread alone," but bread is part of life. This has been de-emphasized in this paper because it rarely is underemphasized²⁷ and needs

²⁷Cf., however, Oliver C. Rupprecht, "We Wish You a Material Christmas!," The Lutheran Witness, LXXX (December, 1961), 5.

little more than mentioning and inclusion in a study aimed at describing what the mainstream of adult Christian education in the local Lutheran congregation ought to be. Suffice it to say that the Christ in truly Christian education pervades everything. The image of God, if it is there, can and should and will be shown in the way in which the Christian learns and uses what he learns--including arithmetic, history, geography, music, etc.²⁸ "To God be the glory in everything" says and learns and teaches the Christian, the one indwelt by the Word of God (Christ) which is communicated by the Word (Gospel) founded upon the Word (Bible).

²⁸Cf. Harry G. Coiner, "The Context of Christian Education," Lutheran Education, XCV (April, 1960), 375-79, e.g.: "Content should never get in the way of the true goal: not the mastery of doctrine [or of arithmetic] but the establishment of a child's relationship to the Lord Jesus and to his Christian brother."

"God educates, and He uses every event of a person's life. Thus education is a process vaster than one that can be organized."

CHAPTER V

THE LEARNING OR GROWING PROCESS AND SETTING

"God works through what He gives."¹ God gives the means and the method, the content and the context, the substance and the setting in which and by which He wants Christian education or growth in the Word (Christ) to take place. This chapter seeks to present how, where and when adults grow (learn) as Christians.

Dr. Feucht says: "In adult education we must have a double focus--on the Word and on the student. One must spark the other."² Christian education aims to communicate and share the Word of God, Christ, by communicating and sharing the Gospel Word of Christ within the context or setting of the Christian fellowship, the church, the communion of saints. Christians nurture one another in mutual spiritual growth and edification. This is both the task (feeding) and the need

¹Harry G. Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," A Symposium of Essays and Addresses given at the Counselors Conference, Valparaiso, Indiana, (September 7-14, 1960), p. 99. Hereafter this report will be referred to as CC Essays.

²Christian Adult Education, A Workshop Report, held at Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois, (July 7-11), 1947), (St. Louis: By the Board for Parish Education, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States), p. 19. Hereafter this report will be referred to as CAE Workshop.

(eating) of every Christian³ and of the fellowship itself. God wants His people to learn to know Him better (grow in Him) by experiencing His love in Christ within the *Koinonía*, the fellowship of Christians.⁴

Christians by their very nature as the Body of Christ and by the continuing presence and activity of the Holy Spirit form a sharing, participating, active community bound together in Christ to each other in love.⁵ The Gospel Word of God is dynamic (gives contact with and contains Christ the Word of God) and should be taught for what it is--the power (or means) of God which brings the church into being and sustains the life

³Ibid., p. 14. A group of Lutheran educators point out: "Each adult is a total personality acting in a total environment in which God and the sum total of complex human relations influences the nature and direction of the growth in learning." Therefore, also "It is necessary to take into account the total personality of an individual, the entire social situation, and his entire experience to evaluate the growth of learning."

⁴Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 152, thinks that Dewey's "influence has been great not only in the public schools but in Christian education as well. As far as changes in persons are concerned it has signal value in at least two respects. One is the importance attached to the individual's own experience in the learning process, as compared with secondhand experience which someone else purveys to him. The other is the importance attached to the sharing of experience, so that learning becomes a social experience. Both these values stand as good in their own right; and, incidentally, are very close to the human side of the New Testament conceptions of knowing by experience within the koinonía."

⁵Earl F. Ziegler, Christian Education of Adults (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 120, says: "The family of God in the church has similarities to the family pattern everywhere, in which grandparents, parents, and children, and all the relatives, have much to contribute to one another."

of those who are its members in the communion of saints. This community is composed of living persons under and with the living Lord, growing and active in worship and service. A very important and essential part of their service activity will be serving the Law-and-Gospel Word of God to the others. Each individually and the group together live on this same Word themselves.⁶

This fellowship or community relationship is called **Koinonía** in the New Testament. It is a relationship that is based on, built on, held together and completed by Jesus Christ the living Word. Teachers and pupils, all within the relationship, should understand that the church is people in communion, that each individual Christian has been placed by God in the context of this sharing community, activated and guided by the Spirit of God.

Strictly speaking there are no teachers or pupils only,⁷ each must be both, all should be both--sometimes teaching the Word, sometimes being taught, and often both teaching and being taught at the same time.⁸ The whole plan was made by

⁶Harry G. Coiner, "The Context of Christian Education," Lutheran Education, XCV (April, 1960), p. 375.

⁷Ziegler, op. cit., p. 112, "The meaning and potentialities of koinonía are too significant to entrust a group to a leader who will not become a member of the group, and who will not prepare himself to use intelligent group procedures." He adds: "Every leader must be a learner."

⁸CAE Workshop, p. 17, educators agree: "In group work the leader is not to decide policies or make plans and decisions, but to be a servant who gives assistance when it is needed. The leader is there to help the group help itself."

God with the idea that all know, prepare and feed the Law-and-Gospel Word of God to each other and eat it as it is served by the other. It is thus that the Christian is meant to receive the Bread of Life and the Water of Life. This is the theology of it.⁹

There are some definite logical deductions for the setting, timing and methods that can be used in the process. The day to day setting would naturally seem to be "family style." Genuine God-inspired, God-directed and God-pleasing "group dynamics," learning, growth and the action growing out of it will take place while the means-of-grace Word of God is being fed to and eaten by the community in their own homes.¹⁰

But from time to time feasts or banquets for a larger group will be prepared and eaten together, perhaps every week--or oftener--either regularly or at certain seasons. A special

Leadership must be exerted from within the group and not apart from it or above it; it demands tactfulness, understanding, and patience, but above all, an unfailing trust in people and in their possibilities as children of God."

⁹Roland Seboldt, "Adult Christian Education in the Parish," unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., pp. 12-23. Cf. section on "The People of the Parish in Adult Education" and its discussion of "laity" and "The Need for a Working Theology of the Parish" and its effort to unite "the theology of the laity and the work of the parish."

¹⁰Ziegler, op. cit., p. 27, says the key to Christians surviving in a pagan culture is group "reinforcement of purpose." He cites the Hebrews' families and the Christians' families and "fellowship of believers" as their strong strengthening influences. He concludes that therefore "probably the most important fact for adult Christian education . . . is the educating influence of the group."

meal has been prepared (or "instituted") for the Christian community at such times. Bonhoeffer describes the feeling and meaning of it for the Christian fellowship:

The day of the Lord's Supper is an occasion of joy for the Christian community. Reconciled in their hearts with God and the brethren, the congregation receives the gift of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and, receiving that, it receives forgiveness, new life, and salvation. It is given new fellowship with God and men. The fellowship of the Lord's Supper is the superlative fulfillment of Christian fellowship. As the members of the congregation are united in body and blood at the table of the Lord so will they be together in eternity. Here the community has reached its goal. Here joy in Christ and his community is complete. The life of Christians together under the Word has reached its perfection in the sacrament.¹¹

Christians belong to one another because God has claimed them for Himself and given them to each other. The relationship (son, citizen, slave, branch) and the Christ given in the Gospel Word-Act of Baptism incorporates Christians with Christ and with each other. The teaching of the Gospel Word within the fellowship and the reception of the Incarnate Word in Holy Communion strengthens and preserves the relationships (man-God and man-man within the Christian fellowship) on earth and unto life everlasting.¹²

Therefore, Coiner points out, Christian nurture includes precept (speaking and teaching the Gospel Word of God), example

¹¹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together, translated from the German by John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1954), p. 122.

¹²Coiner, "The Context of Christian Education," op. cit., pp. 375f. Scriptures cited are Rom. 12:5, Gal. 3:28, and Eph. 4:25.

(the real-life evidence of God at work in others), and the personal experience of being a Christian receiving from God through the means of grace the power to do Christian deeds.¹³

Arthur L. Miller comments in this connection:

Teaching is primarily a matter of influence, and the superior value of the example over precept has long been acknowledged. Despite this recognition of the importance of the good example, it is a fact that lack of consistency between precept and example has made ineffective much of the Christian education offered in the home and in the church.¹⁴

Baptism is extremely important to every Christian individually and to the group as well. It has tremendous implications for Christian education, Christian nurture, all life long.

Holy Baptism is the door by which we are admitted to the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the life everlasting. We are baptized into Christ and at the same time (moment) into the body of Christ, which is the church. The first meaning of Holy Baptism for us is that we are cared for in a most wonderful way, but its second

¹³ Ibid., p. 376.

¹⁴ CAE Workshop, p. 140. This group of Lutheran educators agree and point out further: "Recent studies in the field of education reveal that learning is more complex than we formerly imagined. There is no simple answer to the question: What is learning? We learn in so many ways: by social participation, by imitation, by experimenting, by the ideas we form of ourselves, by our crises, by taking counsel together, by contact with personalities, by being told (by reading), by doing things. Discussion: the army accelerated its basic training from three years to thirteen months largely by visualization and moving the trainees from the film showing directly into the practice field. One teacher claims: we remember 10% of what we hear, 50% of what we see and 90% of what we do. Why and how people forget is perhaps as important as why and how do people learn. The gap between learning and doing must be closed. The more associations we can connect in our minds the better the learning is likely to be," Ibid., p. 15.

meaning is that we are called to care for others. First we are ministered to, but finally we must minister. . . .

A Christian quickly learns that membership in the body of Christ involves not only a fellowship of privilege but also a fellowship of responsibility. To teach, to intercede, and to sacrifice in service is the whole life of a Christian in relation to his neighbor. The baptized, royal priest is set free from sin, death, and hell, and loosed from the slavery and condemnation of the Law, to exercise his freedom, not selfishly, . . . but selflessly, for his neighbor and the whole body of Christ. In his Treatise on Christian Liberty Luther says: "We conclude therefore that a Christian man lives not in himself but in Christ and his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian."¹⁵

The Christian life is life in the Spirit of God. The tools of the Spirit are the means of grace, the means of growth for the Body of Christ. Ziegler says:

The worshiping congregation is a fertile field for adult education that trains in worship, evangelism, fellowship, and especially in learning how to use divinely given means of grace.¹⁶ [underscoring added]

Jansen agrees:

Christian Baptism is grounded in the redemptive deed of Christ. So the conversation with Nicodemus--as indeed every conversation of Christian faith--leads irresistibly to the atoning deed.¹⁷

Or, to get back to the image of God idea and the growth and potential-actualization of the Christian, Sherrill states: "The human self is formed in relationships; if it is de-formed,

¹⁵Coiner, "The Context of Christian Education," op. cit., p. 376.

¹⁶Ziegler, op. cit., p. 65.

¹⁷John Frederick Jansen, The Meaning of Baptism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 76.

it is de-formed in relationships; and if it is re-formed, it is re-formed in relationships."¹⁸

Coiner points out that the "service" activities of the congregation ("baptizing, worshiping, teaching and preaching the Word, celebrating Holy Communion, giving Christian witness and brotherly admonition, living in Christian families and groups") are used by the Holy Spirit to move Christians to work together to "service" one another with the Law and Gospel for the growth and maturity of the entire group.¹⁹

James Smart points out that when God binds men to Himself and to each other in the fellowship of faith,

it is different from ordinary good fellowship because of the depth of its origin; for they hold to each other, not because of their liking for each other, but because their lives henceforward have a common center in God.²⁰

Bonhoeffer makes much the same point and distinguishes sharply between human love and spiritual love. He says that Jesus Christ stands between the lover and the ones to be loved.

What love is, only Christ tells in his Word. Contrary to all my own opinions and conviction, Jesus Christ will tell me what love toward the brethren really is. Therefore, spiritual love is bound solely to the Word of Jesus Christ. Where Christ bids me to maintain fellowship for the sake of love, I will maintain it. Where his truth enjoins me to dissolve a fellowship for love's sake, there I will dissolve it, despite all the protests of my human love. Because spiritual love does not desire but rather serves, it loves an

¹⁸Sherrill, op. cit., p. 157.

¹⁹Coiner, "The Context of Christian Education," op. cit., p. 377.

²⁰James D. Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1954), p. 122.

enemy as a brother. It originates neither in the brother nor in the enemy but in Christ and his Word. Human love can never understand spiritual love, for spiritual love is from above; it is something completely strange, new, and incomprehensible to all earthly love.²¹

"Spiritual love proves itself in that everything it says and does commends Christ," and "spiritual love recognizes the true image of the other person which he has received from Jesus Christ; the image that Jesus Christ himself embodied and would stamp upon all men," says Bonhoeffer.²²

The questions of when and where and who are easy to answer: anytime and every time possible, anywhere and everywhere Christians are together, all Christians and any Christians. The Christian can always use another Christian who speaks God's Word of grace to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged. He needs his brother Christian as a bearer and proclaimer of the divine Word of salvation to him. He needs to realize his need for God and forgiveness, and he needs desperately to hear the Word of forgiveness announced or pronounced.

Bonhoeffer says: "The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure."²³ This means that much more in the way and form of absolution will be going on among

²¹Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p. 35. He continues on the next page with some powerful words on the need to remain independent from each other except through Christ.

²²Ibid., p. 36.

²³Ibid., p. 23.

Christians. Here is the Word of forgiveness directly applied. And, of course, before absolution comes confession. The Word of forgiveness is God's forgiveness in the Christ who as God's Word lived, suffered, died and rose again as payment for the sins of the whole world.

The Word of forgiveness here is not the "I forgive you" that is so hard for people to say--and mean (without holding this over the other's head for the rest of their lives together), but the "God forgives you this in Christ" that is so easy to say because it is well-established, well-used, and well-appreciated fact--the truth made possible by the Truth.

God's Word of forgiveness means so much more than the other, man's. When God's forgiveness is pronounced (and it is every Christian's privilege and responsibility to pronounce it whenever warranted),²⁴ then personal forgiveness will not be withheld by a Christian living in the Word of God and displaying the image of God--it will go along in the same breath.

Einar Billing says: "Our calling is the sum of all those tasks which God gives us along with the forgiveness of sins until the end of life. 'Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses.'"²⁵ He also points out that the

²⁴Einar Billing, Our Calling, translated by Conrad Bergendoff (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1952), p. 18 points out: "We cannot receive forgiveness without the conviction that as it is offered to us, so it is offered to all. Were anyone excepted I should have to say to myself, that is I."

²⁵Ibid., p. 24.

"forgiveness of sins cannot truly be a quietive if at the same time it is not a motive."²⁶

Or, as Bonhoeffer puts the goal of all Christian community:

They meet one another as bringers of the message of salvation. As such, God permits them to meet together and gives them community. Their fellowship is founded solely upon Jesus Christ and this "alien righteousness." All we can say, therefore, is: the community of Christians springs solely from the Biblical and Reformation message of the justification of man through grace alone; this alone is the basis of the longing of Christians for one another.²⁷

Sherrill says too:

The Spirit of God is present and participant in the interaction between selves within the KOINONIA. Whether perceived as the Spirit of God or as the Spirit of Christ, God continues to impart Himself in love and in power to those who respond with the "Yes" to his disclosure of himself.²⁸

A word of caution is in order against those who wittingly or unwittingly leave out the Spirit of God and the Word of God in describing fellowship and its benefits. For example, even a Lutheran topic guide for young adults states:

This, then, is our purpose, to get together for Christian fellowship, to grow in Christian faith and life by mingling with other young adults and to serve others through our homes, our congregations and our communities.²⁹

So strong has been the acceptance of terms and ideas like "fellowship," "interaction," "community," and "group

²⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁷ Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p. 23.

²⁸ Sherrill, op. cit., p. 160.

²⁹ Young Adult Idea Book No. 1, edited by Gustav K. Wiencke (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 6.

dynamics"³⁰ in secular as well as church circles that the mere physical presence of people (or Christians) is often mistaken for a means of grace and of growth. If "by mingling" in the above quotation were changed to "by sharing the Word of Christ while mingling," it would be a valid statement according to the principles outlined in this thesis. No matter how much interaction or group dynamics is taking place, if the Word is not explicit (or implicit enough to be thought of explicitly), there is no warrant to think that anything significant in the field of Christian growth or education has taken place.

Every gathering of Christians should try to become and be a real *κοινωνία*. But this comes not without the Holy Spirit.³¹ And the Holy Spirit comes not without the Word and Sacraments, the Law and the Gospel, the means of grace and growth and fellowship.

³⁰ Martin E. Marty, The New Shape of American Religion (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1958), p. 65 relates: "The Episcopalian Living Church in February 1958 carried on a lively 'attack on a sacred cow,' namely, the use of 'group dynamics' as a gimmick which can lead to mediocrity, the stifling of individual creativity, the removal of redemption from the 'redemptive fellowship.'"

³¹ Ziegler, op. cit., p. 29f. reminds and warns: "The source of koinonia is the Holy Spirit. He is the much neglected Agent in our adult educational program. We have become skillful in role-playing, discussion, panels, brain-storming, lectures, symposium, forum, and a dozen other techniques. We have bowed down to the worship of group dynamics. But if we have kept the Holy Spirit waiting at the door, we have toiled in vain."

An obvious implication for every gathering of Christians, every meeting of congregation members³² (and most certainly every planned meeting in the local parish) is that there be a strong sacramental impetus, emphasis, "push" of the Word of the Gospel to everyone present. This will (as the Holy Spirit works it) bolster God's image among men. Thus, and only thus, as the Word and the work of the Word is being spoken throughout the gathering (called for whatever other "purpose") will God's image be very apparent and the church be true to its mission and its Lord.

³²CAE Workshop, p. 16, reminds educators in this connection: "People are of the utmost importance. When we lack confidence in people, we show lack of faith in the power of the Gospel and in the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit. Holy Scriptures call people "Saints" (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:1-5), "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9), "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6), the "salt of the earth," the "light of the world," "a leaven." Whenever we attempt to dominate Christian people, regiment them, plan for them, or decide for them, we are not keeping in mind that they are the redeemed of God and that they have capacities which we do not realize. We must be mindful of the fact that the Spirit of God is operating within the heart and soul of each individual. Christ Himself should be our perfect pattern for dealing with individuals. We must not permit the demands of time to crowd out our consideration for the education of the people in the meantime. The process (how we do things) is no less important than the project (what we do). When we operate under the assumption that the end justifies the means, the consequences are tragic (e.g. gathering funds for the church). All of our group activity must be critically examined, not only as to its purpose, but also as to the ways, the instruments, and the means by which this purpose is to be realized."

CHAPTER VI

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM AND AGENCIES OF PARISH ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Some of the most important learning takes place in situations that are unplanned and unguided.¹ When God educates, He uses every event, contact and thought in a person's life. Christian education is a process far bigger than one that can be organized by the church at large or by the individual parish.² Only the Holy Spirit can (and does) watch, guide and use the total "program" and process. But He asks and commands the local parish to plan and guide and use every opportunity, ability and the time He provides them. To do what? In the area of adult Christian education it is basically to bring the Word of the Gospel (with its prerequisite--Law) to bear on people to whom the Word (Gospel and Christ) has already come.³ Christian people, all of them, need to be

¹Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 174f.

²Harry G. Coiner, "The Context of Christian Education," Lutheran Education, XCV (April, 1960), p. 378.

³If any non-Christians are enrolled in a Christian education agency, of course, the same Law-and-Gospel Word should be applied to them in their condition with the prayer that the Holy Spirit bring them to faith and life in Christ so the Christian education process can build and help them. You cannot feed a dead man. He needs to be brought to life first, born again. This is not, strictly speaking, the job of Christian education, but it is certainly a prerequisite to it, and as such it will be done. Training Christians to bring the Word to these spiritually dead people is an important part of the task of Christian education; cf. William A. Kramer, "Christian Education," Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1954), pp. 207f.

trained⁴ (given the power, skill and opportunities) to do this in planned and unplanned situations so that it is part (the biggest part) of their lives. The parish plans and uses its agencies to carry out this training.

The Christian education approach and objectives will pervade the total planned (and, hopefully, unplanned) activities of the congregation. That it has obstacles to overcome from the natural sinful attitude that hangs on and dogs the Christian throughout his earthly life is evident to any serious observer of human nature, actions and relationships. And Satan's ally, the world, does its worst to infiltrate and lead astray the minds and emotions of people, including Christian people. Jansen describes the threat of the world as the "Philistine spirit" and points out its wrongness and the need of the Gospel Word to combat it:

A thousand billboards proclaim the Philistine spirit, and this spirit has left its marks on popular religion. What kind of religion is it that croons, "Somebody up there likes me," no matter what I am or what I do? Would not a Jeremiah cry again:

"Well may the heavens be appalled and shudder; for my people have done double wrong, they have forsaken me, the reservoir of fresh water, and hewn out cisterns for themselves, leaky cisterns that cannot hold any water." (Moffatt)

Contemporary Protestantism does not need new programs so much as it needs a "deeper plunge into the gospel."⁵

⁴Cf. Reginald J. Lumb, The Education of Souls (London: The Faith Press, Ltd., 1952), p. 70, who suggests that the responsible committee for Christian education be called the "Board of Religious Training."

⁵John Frederick Jansen, The Meaning of Baptism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 96.

Lutherans have not remained unaffected by the "Philistine spirit" and the dependance on "programs" to combat it. But it is the Gospel Word used by God the Holy Spirit to give Christ and the image of God, not programs no matter how clever, that the Christian adult needs. Programs like all of parish administration exist only to train people and give people "the opportunity or setting for bringing Law and Gospel to one another and to the world."⁶ The adult Christian education curriculum, then, is really all the planned activities of the parish--and all Word-of-God contacts Christians have with each other, planned ahead of time or not.

In concluding this study some of the planned activities of the parish will be considered briefly to see in outline how they fit into and are affected by the whole Word-of-God Christian education approach as presented in this paper. These applications of the theory to the program of adult Christian education in the local Lutheran congregations are by way of example and need to be spelled out in greater detail for (or preferably by) the local congregations themselves in terms of their own situation (maturity, size, needs, balance, etc. as they discover it in surveying themselves--or asking someone to help them survey themselves).

⁶This statement, made by Richard R. Caemmerer, is quoted by Harry G. Coiner, "Holding Fast to the Head--That in Everything He Might Be Pre-eminent," A Symposium of Essays and Addresses given at the Counselors Conference, Valparaiso, Indiana, (September 7-14, 1960), p. 95. Hereafter this report will be referred to as CC Essays.

It is the responsibility of every Christian congregation and every member in it to see that ample opportunities are provided for the Word of the Gospel to be applied to themselves⁷ and to others. Synodical and district and auxiliary agency programs will offer resource materials, ways of applying the Gospel, to be adapted (much more than adopted) if they are fit, proper, timely and useful. Pressure to adopt these programs⁸ and measuring the success of the program by the success of the promotional measures and pressures is false and closely allied to the whole legalistic approach to Christian education.⁹ The basic need and objective of each congregation are concerned with the application of the Word of the Gospel to people.

⁷Cf. Roland Seboldt, "Adult Christian Education in the Parish," unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., p. 32: "In the parish strategy, the pastor and his people will try to reach all members with the Gospel and relate all of life to the worship and honor of God. This approach is for the average, ordinary member of the parish. The emphasis here is on the goal of helping people live under the Gospel."

⁸Jansen, op. cit., p. 76, states: "If Paul was astonished to find that thirty years after Calvary a Christian congregation should see in Baptism--and in faith--only a dedicatory rite that forgot the gift of God, would Paul not be more astonished to find that after twenty centuries the gospel is still mistaken for an impossible summons instead of a gracious deed? If the gifted preacher of Ephesus, Apollos, distorted the gospel despite all his eloquent zeal, is many a gifted preacher not doing so still? If Paul had to remind the church of his day that men are saved by faith in God, not by faith in their own faith, does not our age need this reminder? The church becomes the community of salvation not through programs but through a Person, not through ecclesiastical structures but through God's Spirit. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.'" [underscoring added]

⁹Cf. Richard R. Caemmerer, "Legalism, Revivalism, and the Gospel in Christian Education," Lutheran Education, XCVI (January, 1961), pp. 214-223.

To be sure, there is much need for brotherly admonition (application of that Word) between congregations--both Law and Gospel--on this score rather than on whether or not particular programs are adopted (or money raised for a cause). But what are some of the opportunities already available to most congregations (in varying degree and amount), and what are some general implications for their proper use of the Word?¹⁰

Worship Services

Lutheran worship services are designed and intended to be holy two-way conversation between God and man. The service is also man speaking the Law-and-Gospel Word of God to the other men present and listening and applying it as it comes to him from the others. People have to understand what is happening before they can engage in meaningful participation in the worship. Then genuine worship has a chance to be occurring for all.

Worship includes a sacramental impetus from God and a sacrificial response from man. This will be true in all worship of the congregation, of the individual Christian alone

¹⁰Dr. Martin Marty pins much of his "hope" for the future on what happens in the local congregation. He states that it "is the 'front lines.'" It is the cutting edge of the church against the world. Because it is a long edge it is seldom honed. Yet it must be sharp, ready for all eventualities. Moreover, the parish too must take upon itself the form of a servant," Martin E. Marty, The New Shape of American Religion (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1958), p. 123. Cf. also pp. 124ff. He points out further: "The congregation needs to be shaped theologically, but it is not the intellectual center: it is the arena where ideas are put to test, the place of translation or encounter," p. 132.

with God, of any and every small group from the family to the voters' assembly, board meetings, and ladies, youth, etc. meetings. People will look for it and participate in it.

Anytime there is more than one person present, of course, there is also man-to-man preaching and teaching of the Word. This means congregations will supply some training for all in the art of worship. There are various valid ways of going about the training, ranging from filmstrips and lectures to narrative services, discussion or Bible class topics and just plain guided (or even unguided) practice in leading and/or participation.¹¹

Preaching the Sermon

Under the theory of adult Christian education outlined in this paper sermons will seek to apply properly divided and used Law and Gospel to the people to meet the needs and accomplish the objectives stated in this paper. The sermon will never forget to properly apply Law and Gospel to self and others and to provide for response to this application and the Holy Spirit's use of it. It will never leave out that Word of God directed to the hearers in their particular situation and condition at that time in history.¹² (If it is a specifically evangelistic

¹¹Cf. George W. Hoyer, Faith's First Response, edited by Robert Hoyer (Bible Discussion Guide and Teacher's Manual to the Bible Discussion Guide, Adult Department, Course 5; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1956).

¹²Cf. Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Gospel to be Preached," CC Essays, p. 86.

service, of course, the application and aim will be altered accordingly, but the same Word is applied and the same Spirit is called on to use it.)

The Role of the Pastor

Lip-service is usually paid by books, pastors and conferences to the proposition that the sermon is the most important work of the minister of the Gospel. Its importance is over-rated in the theory (in many, probably most, congregations this is not the important and the time-consuming task of the pastor),¹³ and probably greatly under-rated in the practice of very many, if not most, preachers.¹⁴

Munro says that a pastor's job as a trainer¹⁵ of teachers "may prove to be the wisest investment of time he can make."

¹³Cf. Harry C. Munro, The Church as a School (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, c.1929), p. 205, where he says among other things: "Many a minister is coming to see, however, that, in the long run, his Sunday sermon, important as it is, is far less significant than the many learning-teaching activities under way in class and department."

¹⁴Cf. Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching for the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1959), p. 229. While the sermon by itself, being in lecture form normally, is rather inefficient from an educational standpoint, in the context of the worship service its application of Law and Gospel to the people is both necessary and very important to the best type of Lutheran worship service.

¹⁵Mr. Edgar J. Keuer, Texas District Director of Education, writes candidly: "The preaching and public worship activities of most pastors are no more demanding than their varied teaching functions. Yet their professional training is proportionately much greater in the former. Deficiency in pedagogy lessens the effectiveness of a pastor's total parish ministry. If pastors are to attain an optimal service level, they must be equipped as educational leaders also. Adequate training of pastors in

. . . The busier the minister and the heavier his burdens, the less he can afford to forfeit the resources of an effective teaching staff as his chief reliance."¹⁶ The pastor as a "minister to ministers" idea taken from Ephesians¹⁷ supports this in general.

The popularly prevailing role of the pastor (in Lutheran circles at any rate) is that of a Seelsorger, caretaker of the soul, with its aim the deep comfort and conservation of the Christian in his weal and woe.¹⁸ Under the structure of this paper the pastoral role will change somewhat to include also (to an equal extent and perhaps more) the pastor as the one nurturing and training Christians in nurturing one another with the Gospel Word of God for positive growth in Christ, in worship, in service within the Christian fellowship setting. This latter emphasis is vital--without forgetting that the former is still a very important part of the pastor's (and every Christian's) work in the Word.

Christian education is essential if our people's urgent spiritual needs are to be met adequately." Edgar J. Keuer and Others, "Symposium: 'What is the Most Significant Issue (or Issues) Confronting Our Synod in the Area of Lutheran Education?'" Lutheran Education, XCVII (April, 1962), 358.

¹⁶Munro, op. cit., p. 205.

¹⁷Eph. 4:11f.: ". . . some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

¹⁸Cf. Marty, op. cit., p. 138, who convincingly describes the pastor's role as that of a "pastoral director." He warns, however: "Our society has tended to make the pastoral director a pastoral director, often at the expense of lay vocation."

Baptism

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism in the child is the birth of faith and not, strictly speaking, Christian education to him. Baptism to an adult already having come to faith is a means of growth in the Christ he already has within him.¹⁹ In either instance the act and rite are educational to the parents and congregation present. Baptism into Christ also means membership in the communion of saints, the fellowship of believers.²⁰ It means that every other Christian (man, woman and child) in the congregation has a new responsibility every time an infant is baptized (or an adult joins the church by Baptism or other means). All in the congregation are responsible for the spiritual welfare and growth of all others. This means all will support (by prayer, finances, teaching, repairing, building, and every other way open to them) the congregation's ways of educating and nurturing the baptized ones with the Word of Christ²¹ (including Christian day school,

¹⁹Jansen, op. cit., p. 36. A prayer quoted by Jansen in connection with the Baptism of adults shows explicit educational implications: "Defend, O Lord, this thy servant with thy heavenly grace, that he may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto thine everlasting kingdom."

²⁰Martin H. Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 6: "In Jesus Christ, through His active grace in Baptism and the Word, men are saved from judgement (Acts 2:40), brought to God, reconciled, forgiven, made members of the new people of God."

²¹"When the Roman Catholic speaks of an 'infused grace' through Baptism, the gift becomes an impersonal substance instead of the declaration of a personal relationship with Christ. When the Protestant separates Baptism from the whole life of

Bible classes and Sunday school, support of pastor and others who do this work or free others to do it, all the agencies genuinely doing the work of Christ for young, for old, and everyone in between).

Perhaps the current rite of Baptism will be altered to include some of these thoughts more explicitly (certainly in more understandable language) and provide for a response or action by the congregation.²² As Jansen points out: "Sacraments are the enacted word of God proclaiming Christ crucified."²³ The congregation will see to it that this Word is proclaimed by having the Sacraments administered and being party to them.²⁴

faith he makes it an empty rite. 'We may not give Baptism,' says Forsyth, 'unless we also bring the gospel and promise to keep bringing it, to the young life.'" Jansen, op. cit., p. 89.

²²Cf. the teachings and suggestions in The Sacraments of the Church, edited by Robert Hoyer (Bible Discussion Guide, Adult Department, Course 24; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1956), Perhaps a response by the congregation could be added affirming the old members' responsibilities of aiming to build up the new members in Christ by supplying Law and Gospel ministration and hearing that supplied by the new members in return.

²³Jansen, op. cit., p. 52. And again: "The sacrament of Christian Baptism is itself the enacted Word of God," p. 14.

²⁴Ibid., p. 100f. "Every Protestant must recognize that word and sacrament are not purely private concerns but are given to the church and are acts of worship in the church. It is especially important that the water of Baptism be seen as issuing from the threshold of the Temple. We are untrue to New Testament Baptism if we make of the sacrament a private ritual instead of an act of the worshipping congregation. Home 'christenings' and private baptism are contradictions in term, for the worshipping congregation is quite as immediately concerned as the child or the parent. This is not to say that in times of emergency the church may and should not come to the home or hospital. It does say that Baptism loses all meaning

For the child, the parents, godparents and congregation (and indeed all Christians) Baptism is full of life-long Christian education implications. As Jansen puts it: "Baptism assures me that God has given me His name, so that I may come to know even as also I am known."²⁵

The Lord's Supper--Holy Communion

A "worthy" reception of the Lord's Supper is Christian education. Holy Communion is direct application of a means of grace for strengthening the Christian, imparting Christ Himself in, with and under the bread and wine. Every effort ought be made for frequent reception by the Christian, arising out of a felt need of the forgiveness of his sin and his need for the continuing, growing presence of the Incarnate Word of God given in this visible Gospel Word.

There are various ways of doing this. Each way will be judged by the standard: Does it help get Law and/or Gospel across to people? For example, if the custom of announcing to the pastor (or other responsible Christian) has application of Law and Gospel as part of it, then it is a good and worthwhile thing to do. If not, or if it can be done better in a different way, then let the custom go. The same is true of the

when it is disassociated from the believing community of faith. Of course, the Spirit of God is not limited to this or to any stream. Nonetheless, the normal working of the Spirit is in and through the witness and worship of the church. The river of grace still issues from the Temple threshold."

²⁵Ibid., p. 41.

the special confessional service practice. When a Christian receives the Lord's Supper in the congregation (or even privately from the pastor) he also "proclaims the Lord's death" and his own condition of sin and need of forgiveness. Whoever is present, sees him and understands what Holy Communion is (even if it is only the pastor), has the Law and Gospel preached to him as the person (or the persons, the congregation) communes. This, too, is Christian education in a very real and important sense.

Counseling, Confession, and Private Absolution

Counseling people in their problems is taking up an ever-increasing amount of the pastor's time and effort. There are many questions arising that need careful thought and answers for the pastor in this part of his work.²⁶ From the Christian education standpoint of this paper it would seem that if through the counselor's use of counseling techniques the Christian can better see his problem as the result of sin in his life. Then as the Law is applied by him or the counselor and as confession follows, absolution can be pronounced and

²⁶Christian Adult Education, A Workshop Report, held at Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois, (July 7-11, 1947) (St. Louis: By the Board for Parish Education, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States), p. 27. Hereafter this report will be referred to as CAE Workshop. "Pastors must be prepared to discuss and meet frankly marital and home problems. The time of marriage is a good time to discuss marriage and family problems. The pastor should also have some plan for continuing counsel after marriage."

the Word of Christ will have been applied in a very direct and understandable manner. The Holy Spirit can use that application of the Gospel Word to give Christ to the man in greater degree, and Christian growth, Christian education has taken place.

Counseling, confession and absolution constitute a frontier today that needs much more exploration and use by the church and its leaders, pastors and laymen alike. Much of the work of the "elders" in a congregation will likely fall into this category as it is developed and taught. Confession and absolution are the privilege of Christian to Christian and certainly will be used much, much more than they are. Absolution (after confession) is application of Gospel pure and simple, and therefore it is of the essence and heart of true Christian education. Absolution is directly applied preaching of the Word of forgiveness.

Bible Classes and other Formal Adult Christian Education

Possibly the biggest danger in formal classes is getting lost or bogged down in learning or disagreeing about fact-type knowledge and forgetting the real needs of the people and the real objectives of Christian education. This is hard to overcome among contemporary adults largely because of their former secular education and the connotations of the word "class."²⁷ If the physical setting is also akin to previous secular (or

²⁷Cf. Seboldt, op. cit., pp. 31-33.

maybe even religious) classes, this will magnify the problem and the "set" of mind and emotions.

The more the setting can be geared to a natural, almost unplanned, non-class, living-room or back-yard atmosphere (meaning also smaller groups or "clusters" of people probably in circular or semi-circular groupings), the more likely will an attempt to get away from fact-knowledge goals to speaking-the-Gospel Word goals be successful. Another reason for small rather informal classes or groupings is the training factor that seeks to provide practice and expression for the greatest number of people, a real "doing" of speaking the Word. This will also more closely approximate the "normal" unplanned setting of everyday life when all adult Christians will want to speak the Law-and-Gospel Word wherever they are. People who are used to doing this only in a formal setting have difficulty doing it in informal situations. (The opposite is often true, too, of course.)

Terminal courses and electives seem to be enjoying current popularity. There are both advantages and disadvantages to them. The alert parish will weigh and try out and evaluate the factors in the light of the Gospel application and training that they offer.²⁸

A workshop of Lutheran educators states:

Re-training is necessary for pastors, teachers and laymen in the matter of Bible class methods. Only in this way can we overcome the tendency to lecture,

²⁸ Earl F. Ziegler, Christian Education of Adults (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 76.

preach, and catechize in the Bible class. This method may be successful with children (?), it is not the method that should be employed with young people and adults.²⁹

While perhaps overstated, the above statement is essentially correct. "The primary purpose of forming adult groups is to attain an objective that could not be achieved by individual efforts."³⁰ And that objective, as outlined in this paper, is to apply the (Law and) Gospel Word of God to people in their needs. As the Holy Spirit uses the applied Word to change and help people, God's glory will increase among them.

Although the direct application of Law and Gospel may not be in the exact words of the Bible or even arising out of a direct Bible study situation, many times it will, and the connection and strength gained from the proclamation in such settings is very, very helpful to the proclamation in other settings. As Ziegler says: "Bible study will be a must as long as time lasts. How adults can best be grouped for Bible study is the primary question every local church must face."³¹ Or as Franzmann puts it:

[God] does not remain a remote and shadowy sort of philosopher's God, He condescends to enter history and does His gracious work there, for us men and for our salvation. If we study historically the life of the first Church and the nature of the apostolic proclamation which called that first church into being, we shall be enabled to hear God speaking to us now.³²

²⁹CAE Workshop, p. 23.

³⁰Ziegler, op. cit., p. 74.

³¹Ibid., p. 76.

³²Franzmann, op. cit., p. 3.

In many congregations the Sunday morning Bible class (for adults) is potentially the break-through point in the wall of unconcern and inability to speak the Word one to another for adult Christians. Of course, the nature of the classes, aims, setting, content, and number and quality of pupils, will have to change--quite radically in many instances. An application of the theory discussed in this thesis to the (mainly) Sunday morning Bible class opportunity is to have many small classes as workshops, training centers, laboratories and the scene of action--Christian education, Word-of-God action one to the other and back again all around.

If all (or at first perhaps only a few) know why they are there, they will be training and practicing for every other Christian Gospel application opportunity in their daily lives. At the same time they will be applying Gospel to others with needs and having it applied by others to their needs--all with the ever-present prayer for the Holy Spirit to use it.

With the worship service opportunities preceding or following the "class" and with the family opportunities that are normally present (if not always appreciated and used) on Sundays for the adult Christian, the context makes the Sunday morning Christian education time potentially terrific. And that is not even to mention the opportunity (inherent in the time) to have almost the whole congregation a part of this effort--an on-going regular life-long part of it without all the promotional energy and schemes of the short or long-term special educational efforts, popular as they have become and valuable as they can be.

Other formal adult education groups (or education times within groups, for example "topics" in so-called auxiliary agencies) have similar opportunities to the Sunday morning "Bible class" but usually for a shorter time. Advantages they possess may be that the best physical surroundings and teaching equipment the church possesses is usually available and the groups are more likely to share common interests and experiences in their lives (young adults, parents, ladies, men). And some groups are Christian service agencies of the congregation concentrating on evangelism, parent education, social welfare, construction and/or repair, altar care or others. This special interest and activity the members of the group have in common and are organized around offers the cues to Law and Gospel application (and training in applying it rightly) among them. Here again, the group will ask the Holy Spirit's guidance and use of the applied Word and will give God the credit for what is accomplished through it. And the group will go to God for forgiveness and strength and wisdom when God's goals are not being accomplished in people.

Parent Education

One Christian educator said: "In our particular denomination it seems to me the most significant things are; (a) An increased sense of the need for leadership education; (b) A recognition that almost all education is adult education; one

example of this is our program of parent education."³³ Coiner says: "Christians need to learn how to express their faith in acts together with all who are in the communion of saints."³⁴ Ideally the place to begin this, and certainly the place where there are potentially the greatest opportunities to express faith in acts together, is the Christian family.

People are recognizing the importance of and their need for better Christian families.³⁵ There is an adage posted prominently (at the eye level of the parents standing behind their son or daughter) in at least one juvenile court that reads: "Better children come from better parents." A pastor comments on progress in this area in his parish: "Our couples group is two years old. They felt a need. They requested it themselves . . . a need for family life education."³⁶ He says further: "PTA used to be business. Now family life is

³³Quoted in Donald Louis Deffner, "The Church's Role in Adult Education," unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1957, p. 408.

³⁴Coiner, "The Context of Christian Education," op. cit., p. 379.

³⁵In the 1961 packet of "Parent-Teacher Material," the pamphlet "Planning Your Program, Suggestions for the Education Committee," published by the NLPTL, 852 Wall St., St. Louis 15, Mo., says on page 1 that the meetings should be "full of Christian meaning and fellowship." It underscores and quotes "the purposes of your P.T.L. . . . namely, 'to help parents and teachers to achieve greater competence in Christian child training.'" It further emphasizes, "Keep your programs spiritual," and "you are a group of Christian parents operating within the orbit of the Christian church to become better equipped for your Christian teaching and training tasks."

³⁶Deffner, op. cit., p. 130.

discussed."³⁷ There is a rash of new books on the Christian family and the Church's responsibilities and ministry to families. Some of these are very good books.³⁸

Among many changes that have left their mark upon the contemporary family are: father becoming a stranger in the home and the training of the children falling entirely upon the mother; too much leisure time resulting in social and community demands, careers and jobs becoming more important to mothers than the training of their children; the growing materialistic philosophy of life--resulting in a disregard for higher values in life, especially religious; the growing disregard for the sanctity and durability of marriage; and the waning of the whole religious atmosphere in the modern family--

family prayers and devotions have been lost in the modern home; too often no time at all for group gatherings. Members develop individual tastes and habits, and the home just becomes a "parking place." The picture of the ideal home according to Psalm 128 is the rare occasion.³⁹

But people are increasingly aware that something is wrong in the home and are concerned enough out of pride in the way

³⁷Ibid. The CAE Workshop, p. 28, points out that in regard to: "Parent-Teacher and Teacher-Parent cooperation there should be an exchange of ideas and interest between teacher and parent, between school and home, between church and home. The true educator does his work with the parents, not for the parents."

³⁸Cf. as a starter at least: Oscar E. Feucht, Helping Families Through the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1957) and John Charles Wynn, Pastoral Ministry to Families (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1957). Wynn, for example points out: "A marvelously teachable time for parents is that period of infanticipation," p. 59.

³⁹CAE Workshop, p. 25.

they bring up their children, if for no better reason, to do something about it. Here, certainly, is another key entry port (or break-through point) for genuine Christian education to get through to adults.

If the adults, the parents, can be convinced that better children do normally come from better parents, that God intends for the parents to grow and keep on growing in Christ through the Word of Christ and that their failures (and their children's failures) are basically sin, "God-failure" in their lives, then the Word of the Gospel can be applied and by the Holy Spirit's working on them through the Word they can and will grow. The best family and parent education is the same as all adult Christian education: training Christians to minister the Word of Christ to one another in the family setting, beginning with, ever continuing with and increasing in husband-wife Christian ministering-the-Word-of-Christ relations. This needs to be taught and practiced and done. According to the theory of Christian education outlined in this paper, this is the best, the only real valid form of Christian parent education (the actual mutual application of the Word and anything leading up to it) and Christian family education. Learning to apply (and actually applying) Law and Gospel to the family members and the family as a whole will be the main concern of all Christian education for the family and within the family. This will be the prime concern of pre- and post-marital counseling, baptismal "arrangements," the cradle roll, the parent-teacher league, a section in the church library, courses and topics in Christian

study (or edification) groups from time to time, as well as in sermons, family nights, every-member visits, mimeographed and printed bulletins, letters and tracts, and at least the boards of elders and education regularly, and/or whatever other ways the contemporary Lutheran parish deals with or can deal with the needs of the Christian family.

Ziegler issues a warning not to forget the middle-aged parents and also

those middle aged men and women who are single, widowed, divorced, and otherwise. Many issues arise to confront them with spiritual problems that a wholesome church life can resolve. They are part of this family of God that is the church.⁴⁰

The point is well taken. The church will endeavor to provide "family-like" opportunities to minister the Word and have it ministered for those who are outside the usual family opportunities, including also especially the growing number of aged.

A Unified, Co-ordinated Approach

The Christian community as a whole is meant to be the scene of a redemptive ministry to the human self as a whole. To hold this view means trying to abandon two fragmentations: fragmenting the self, and fragmenting the ministries which the Christian community renders to persons.⁴¹

Munro says:

The total curriculum may be administered by various agencies, but it must be so unified as to be cumulative and constructive. This requires sufficient correlation of agencies to secure unity of program.⁴²

⁴⁰Ziegler, op. cit., p. 104.

⁴¹Sherrill, op. cit., p. xi.

⁴²Munro, op. cit., p. 47.

He and others strongly suggest the establishment of a "correlating cabinet,"⁴³ "council in education"⁴⁴ or "committee on adult work"⁴⁵ composed of representatives of the various agencies and boards to co-ordinate the educational work of the parish and integrate it.

Ziegler says: "The Adult Committee will be a practicing laboratory of adult education" as it tries various methods out in explorations and tests.⁴⁶ And he proposes an outline of the first major activity of the committee, to learn what is being done. It includes the preparation of charts and diagrams and if done right will take three or four meetings, he warns.⁴⁷ This type of committee and activity can be very beneficial if the true needs of the people and the true goals and means of Christian education are kept uppermost (or made uppermost) in the minds of the members of the committee, and if they are able to effectively carry it back to their respective groups.

If, however, such a committee meets simply for the sake of "involving" them or successfully "promoting a program," then the committee has no place (is wasted effort) under the theory of adult Christian education this paper has been describing. Or, as Ziegler put a similar thought: "When men

⁴³Ibid., p. 246.

⁴⁴CAE Workshop, p. 30.

⁴⁵Ziegler, op. cit., pp. 64ff.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁷Ibid.

and women attend an organization to 'keep it going,' something serious is wrong with the organization. Its objective should be to 'keep them going.'"⁴⁸ The organization known as the Christian congregation and its organizations will have as their objective: to keep people growing--in Christ through the Word.

Seboldt points out that in forming their strategy the people of a parish will not consider any method or plan permanent or sacred in itself. "A creative parish will continually be searching for better ways of communication. No method can become a utopian solution to adult growth. Every pattern has some weaknesses which need to be recognized."⁴⁹ He says further:

In developing strategy, the people of a parish will be realistic about the adult resistance to learning and spiritual and intellectual inertia. . . . Group pressure and personal persuasion will not produce change. This is a gift brought as a grace by the Holy Spirit. . . . Determined ignorance will not be changed by knowledge, for knowledge may be gained without a changed attitude or a new faith. The solution for ignorance is faith, produced by the Holy Spirit as a gift of God. In the strategy for adult work, a realistic attitude concerning the inertia of the flesh-bound men is important, together with faith in the Holy Spirit to overcome the resistance and build up the life of the New Man.

The strategy will also include a readiness for casual opportunities to open the vision of adults outside the structure of the parish. Before and after meetings, in occasional conversation, and at unexpected times real growth can be accomplished in the lives of God's people.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 76.

⁴⁹ Seboldt, op. cit., p. 33.

The strategy for adult education means turning everything in the parish into a communication activity of helping each other live as new creatures in faith under the grace of God. The parish will not become a mere institution, social organization, or business, but a university of the Gospel. The parish provides for the universal growth of all people to fulfill their function as disciples of Jesus Christ.⁵⁰

Church Boards and Committees

Seboldt devotes a major section of his paper to the application of adult Christian education to the various boards (and some other agencies) of the congregation in what he terms "In-service training."⁵¹ He feels that

As teachers continue professional growth through "in-service training," so the officers and leaders of a parish grow in Christian life in the performance of their responsibilities. . . . In-service training always includes the need to ask the basic questions: "What is the church? What is its purpose? How does the work of our group contribute to this purpose? Do we rely on the grace of God in Christ Jesus to supply our need?"⁵²

Growth in faith and life is nowhere so direct as in the work of the board of elders. These men have some of the greatest responsibility in parish administration. These men cannot hope to perform their task, unless they grow in understanding and purpose through in-service training. The elders learn to care for the lives of others as they receive the love of Christ in their own lives. Elders can become "pastors to the pastor" of the parish. They encourage, forgive, admonish

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 33f.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 35ff.

⁵²Ibid., p. 35.

and counsel with him. The combination of prayer, study and practice in the work of elders provides ample and ideal opportunities for ministering the Word to people and gaining strength for such ministry from the ministrations of the pastor and other elders in meetings that can be excellent adult Christian education.⁵³

The work of evangelism is the responsibility of every Christian, therefore the parish needs to provide leadership and training for this important work. This, too, is an ideal opportunity for in-service training. Every method is evaluated in terms of its effective communication of the Gospel. Members of the parish grow as they train one another by communicating the Word to each other to be the personal ambassadors of Christ the Word of God.⁵⁴

The Board of Christian education is to provide for the Christian training, the proper administration of Law and Gospel and training in administering it, to children, youth and adults. Details dare not detract from keeping the purpose clear and central. As the board members formulate a clear theology of Christian education, apply it to themselves and one another, and evaluate the effectiveness of their agencies, they will grow in Christ as the Holy Spirit uses God's Gospel on them. The Gospel is the unique gift which the Church practices, teaches and applies in the formal education agencies as well as informally.

⁵³Ibid., p. 35-38.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 38.

The stewardship board is concerned with all the gifts of God in the parish. It will use Law and Gospel in helping people raise their sights in using their gifts. The theology of stewardship and the purpose of the church are necessary study materials for the board to open their eyes to their own and their fellow members' need of the Gospel. Their work with the congregation requires direct application of the Gospel in the task of encouraging parish members to grow in their discipleship of giving and service.⁵⁵

Members of the board of trustees can grow in Christ while going about their duties. They will be led to see that managing the property is important to the ministry of the Gospel. Painting and repairing can be acts of worship-response to God as much as praying, witnessing or teaching. A master plumber and a skilled carpenter on the board of trustees may not normally regard their work in maintaining the church property and conducting part of the business activities of the church as having anything to do with adult Christian education. But, if the people of a parish think of themselves as part of Christ's body in all that they do and say and make it a point to apply Law and Gospel here, too, then the Holy Spirit can provide growth in Christian maturity for these trustees during their terms of service.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 39-42.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 35 and 42.

In voters assemblies and church council meetings the use of the Gospel of forgiveness will promote an attitude of loving Christian concern for the staff and all members of the congregation. Decisions are often difficult and opinions may be divided. The Gospel needs to be shared and believed at such times with each attending member speaking in a tone of mutual helpfulness in Christ. Reflecting the love of Christ as living epistles (living speakers of the Gospel) becomes a means of building up the faith of one another because it is really the application of the Gospel Word of God to the situations in which the Christian congregation finds itself.⁵⁷

People who need church discipline are opportunities for the congregation to apply the Law of God directly and forcefully to people in the hope of creating a felt need and desire for the Word of the Gospel.⁵⁸

In-service training and applying the Word will be done in all other committees and groups of the congregation, too. Every time a group of God's people meet for any specific job, they are at the same time gathering with the assurance that God is in their midst and speaks to them through the applied Word of the Gospel spoken by each of them. Each meeting of Christian adults thus becomes an opportunity for growth in the Gospel of God's grace. Once any group of Christians sees its

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 42f.

⁵⁸It is interesting in this connection that the German word "zucht" in Kirchenzucht ("church discipline") can be translated "education" as well as "discipline."

activity as the church of Jesus Christ at work (really Jesus Himself at work as He lives in them and works with and through them) and the focus of that work is Christian growth and service, then every activity becomes in-service training, or adult Christian education, as the Gospel Word of Christ is handled and applied for these purposes of God.⁵⁹

Other Agencies and Avenues

"Choirs are probably a more important factor in adult Christian education than is usually supposed. More choirs should combine the study of worship, Scripture reading and prayer with their rehearsals."⁶⁰ The Lutheran liturgy and the accents of the church year offer many opportunities for director and choir members to talk and sing both Law and Gospel to each other as well as to the congregation. The worship-response leadership the choir offers will be genuine as the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel Word spoken at rehearsals. The choir also sings the Gospel to bring Christ, the Word-made-flesh, to people.

Sunday school teachers and Bible class leaders meetings are excellent opportunities for people sharing similar concerns to speak the Word of God first to each other that they may better apply it to their classes and help the class members apply it to each other and back again to the teacher or leader. Certainly it helps the teachers to know more about

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 44.

⁶⁰CAE Workshop, p. 39.

the Bible and Bible times and about teaching methods and child (and adult) psychology. These will lead to a better understanding and application, especially of God's Law. However, the greatest need of the teacher and learner is growth in God's grace by someone applying God's Law and Gospel to him. Staff meetings will seek to do this above all else and will seek to do it regularly and often.

Christian literature and church libraries⁶¹ offer opportunities for Christians to have Law and Gospel applied to them by a fellow Christian through written words rather than through spoken words. Radio, television, films, pictures, and recordings are other media that people can use to apply the Law and Gospel of God to others. To the extent that this is actually done and the Holy Spirit uses it, to that extent adult Christian education is going on.

Visitation and counseling on the part of pastor and teachers is important. But this visitation should be specific and practical. Visit, not so much with the idea of getting the family to do something for the church, but for the purpose of helping the family with the resources of the church. The laity should be drawn into this program of visitation.⁶²

⁶¹Ibid., p. 21. "A good library available to all members of the congregation and a Book Table connected with every Bible Class are real needs in every congregation."

In answer to a question asking why church libraries are not used more a leading Protestant replied: "Probably the fact that most churches are not set up to provide the opportunity for study at a church library or to provide efficient ways of getting books distributed," Deffner, op. cit., p. 407.

Dr. Feucht said: "Too many (most) church members are not trained to read in the spiritual field (except church papers-- inadequately)," Ibid., p. 415. He also pointed out the general lack of a "functioning, motivating, integrating librarian," Ibid.

⁶²CAE Workshop, p. 28.

The visiting and counseling will, of course, if it hopes to accomplish anything, make use of God's Word of Law and Gospel and will include prayer to the Holy Spirit to use the Word of Christ to give the people more of Christ.

Summary Conclusion

The entire sixth chapter of the thesis has been a summary of the theory of adult Christian education developed in this paper. It has been a summary by way of example, by pointing to and outlining the implications of the theory in the life of the church as lived in the local congregations.

But in concluding this study, the original statement of the plan of this paper made on page eighteen should be recalled and an assessment made of whether this plan was followed.

Evidences were presented (point 1) of current problems in adult Christian education. The meaning of Christian education (point 2) and Christian knowledge was explored and a description of how knowledge of God grows in Christians was given including definitions of the place and meaning of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, Law and Gospel, and the means of grace in the process of Christian education and growth. Five basic needs (point 3) of the Christian in carrying out God's plan for him were outlined. The objectives for adult Christian education (point 4) were formulated apposite to the needs outlined, and the means of advancing toward these objectives by the Christian adult were specified. The Church was described as the intended context or setting (point 5) of Christian

education. Finally the theory was applied to many areas of Christian life and activity in the local Lutheran parish (point 6), the implications being shown by examples.

Further studies in this field may include a comprehensive philosophy and/or theology of adult Christian education. The insights and contributions which such disciplines as psychology and the social sciences, contemporary literature and the arts, and the science of communications can provide may be helpful in further understanding people and in getting Law and Gospel clearly applied to them in their situations. More popular books and articles need to be written saying and expanding upon what is stated in this thesis. Adult educational bulletins and curricular materials need evaluating and possible re-writing in the light of the theory stated in this paper, and many more such materials still need to be written. Perhaps most important of all, pastors and other leaders and people of the parishes need to plan, evaluate and promote Christian adult education in the light of the theory here presented. It is hoped that thus Christian adults in Lutheran parishes will be ministering God's Word and receiving it in every program and in all of life.

This study has developed the theory or rationale of adult Christian education. It has said that Christ is the life and power of the Church. The Church exists not to perpetuate the teachings or practices of Christ, but to be His body. Christian education is every application of the Gospel to the end that the body (and every Christian member of it) be sustained and defended, grow in Christ, worship and serve Him, glorifying Him by being His image in all of life that all may increasingly praise Him.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bible, Holy. The New English Bible, New Testament.
- Billing, Einar. Our Calling. Translated by Conrad Bergendoff. Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1952.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. Life Together. Translated from the German by John W. Doberstein. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954.
- Caemmerer, Richard R. God's Great Plan for You. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961.
- . "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (April, 1961), 197-208.
- . "Legalism, Revivalism, and the Gospel in Christian Education," Lutheran Education, XCVI (January, 1961), 214-223; XCVI (February, 1961), 278-287.
- . Preaching for the Church. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959.
- "Christian Adult Education, A Workshop Report." Held at Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois. July 7-11, 1947. St. Louis: Board for Parish Education, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States. (mimeographed)
- Coiner, Harry G. "The Context of Christian Education," Lutheran Education, XCV (April, 1960), 375-379.
- . Teaching the Word to Adults. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1962.
- . "The Theology of Christian Education Related to Its Purposes." Unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
- . "What Is Lutheran in Education?" Unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
- Deffner, Donald Louis. "The Church's Role in Adult Education." Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1957.
- "Education for Eternity," A Christian Education Rally Day Service. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. [1958]
- Feucht, Oscar E. Bible Class Builder, III (January, 1958), 1-4.

- . Helping Families Through the Church. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1957.
- Forsyth, Nathaniel F., editor. The Minister and Christian Nurture. Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1957.
- Franzmann, Martin H. The Word of the Lord Grows. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1961.
- Handbook of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. 1960 edition.
- Hoyer, George W. Faith's First Response, Bible Discussion Guide, Adult Department, Course 5. Edited by Robert Hoyer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1956.
- . Faith's First Response, Teacher's Manual to the Bible Discussion Guide, Adult Department, Course 5. Edited by Robert Hoyer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1956.
- Hoyer, Robert J. "Adults Are Learning," The Lutheran Witness, LXXXI (March, 1962), 106-109.
- . The Sacraments of the Church, Adult Bible Teacher's Manual, Course 24. Edited by Robert Hoyer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1961.
- . Yours Is the Kingdom, Adult Bible Discussion Guide, I, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1961.
- Jahsmann, Allan Hart. What's Lutheran in Education? St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1960.
- Jansen, John Frederick. The Meaning of Baptism. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958.
- Keuer, Edgar J., and Others. "Symposium: 'What is the Most Significant Issue (or Issues) Confronting Our Synod in the Area of Lutheran Education?'" Lutheran Education, XCVII (April, 1962), 358-365.
- Kleinhans, Theodore. Talking With God. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1962.
- Kramer, William A. "What Is a Good School?," Advance, V (January, 1958), 12-13.
- Kretzmann, Otto Paul. The Sign of the Cross. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1959.
- Little, Sara. Learning Together in the Christian Fellowship. Richmond: John Knox Press, c.1956.

- Lumb, J. Reginald. The Education of Souls. London: The Faith Press, Ltd., 1952.
- Lutheran Cyclopedia. Edited by Erwin L. Lueker. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1954.
- Marty, Martin E. The New Shape of American Religion. New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1958, 1959.
- Miller, Kenneth Dexter. Man and God in the City. New York: Friendship Press, c.1954.
- Miller, Randolph Crump. The Clue to Christian Education. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1950.
- Mueller, Marvin Frank. "The Theological Basis for Adult Bible Study and its Practical Aspects in the Adult Educational Program of the Church." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1961.
- Munro, Harry C. The Church as a School. St. Louis: The Bethany Press, c.1929.
- Principles for the Development of Curriculum for Adults. Published under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church in the United States, c.1961.
- Repp, Arthur C. "The Theological Implications of Confirmation," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXI (April, 1960), 227-235.
- Reu, Johann Michael. Catechetics. 3rd edition. Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1931.
- Roehrs, Walter R. "The Theology of the Word of God in the Old Testament," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (May, 1961), 261-273.
- Rupprecht, Oliver C. "We Wish You a Material Christmas!," The Lutheran Witness, LXXX (December, 1961), 5.
- Scharlemann, Martin H. "God's Acts as Revelation," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (April, 1961), 209-216.
- "The Paradox in Perspective," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVIII (May, 1957), 349-359.
- Seboldt, Roland. "Adult Christian Education in the Parish." Unpublished manuscript in the possession of John E. Golisch, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
- Sherrill, Lewis Joseph. The Gift of Power. New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1955.

Smart, James D. The Teaching Ministry of the Church. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1954.

A Symposium of Essays and Addresses given at the Counselors Conference, Valparaiso, Indiana, September 7-14, 1960.
St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. [1961]

Walther, C. F. W. The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel. Translated from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.

Weigand, Joseph A. The Catechist and the Catechumen. New York: Benziger Brothers, c.1924.

Wynn, John Charles. Pastoral Ministry to Families. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1957.

Young Adult Idea Book. No. 1. Edited by Gustav K. Wiencke. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958.

Ziegler, Earl F. Christian Education of Adults. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958.